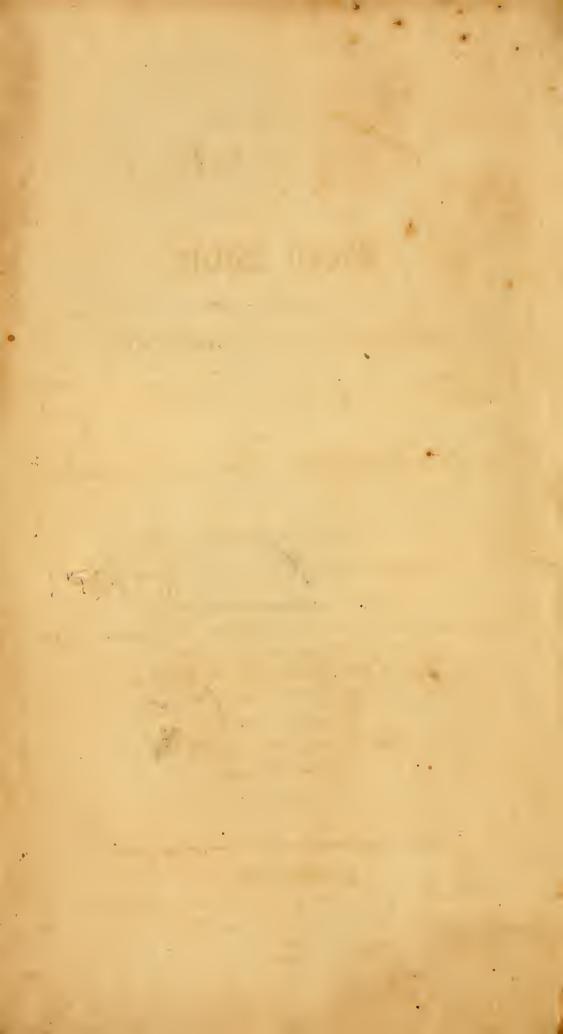


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#### COMPLETE

### HISTORY

OF THE

# Poly Bible,

AS CONTAINED IN THE

#### OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS,

FROM THE LAST OF THE PROPHETS TO THE BIRTH OF CHRIST,

AND

THE LIFE OF OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR AND HIS APOSTLES, &c.

WITH

#### COPIOUS NOTES,

CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY, PRACTICAL AND DEVOTIONAL.

From the text of the Rev. LAURENCE HOWEL, A. M. with considerable ADDITIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS,

By the Rev. GEORGE BURDER,
Author of Village Sermons, &c.

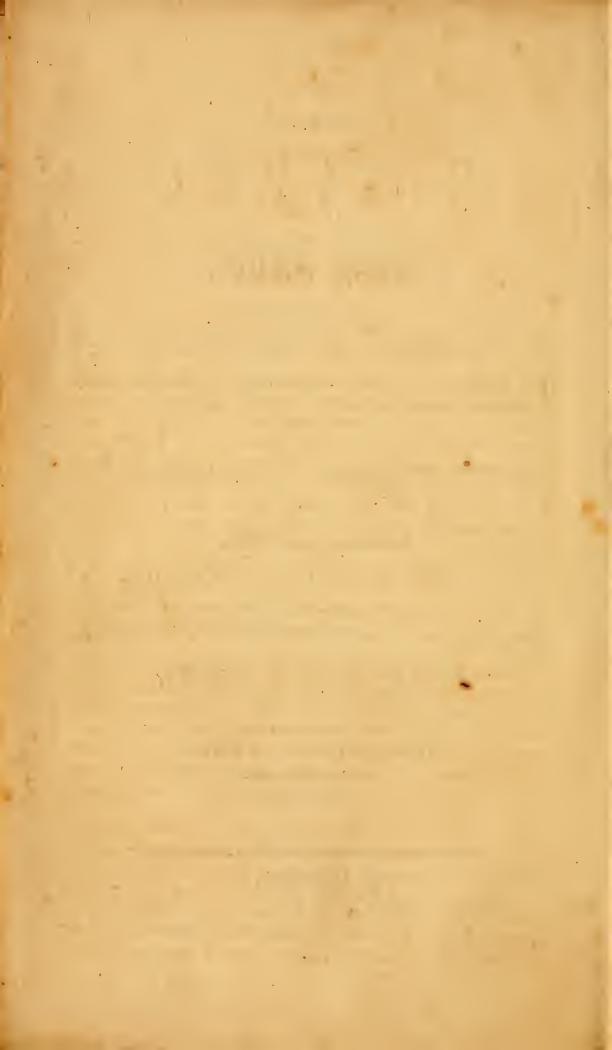
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### HISTORY

OF THE

### Holy Wible.

BOOK THE FIFTH, CONTINUED.

IN Manasseh we behold a remarkable proof of the insufficiency of education alone, to form a good and virtuous character. Something more powerful is wanting to fix and preserve right principles in the human heart. The depravity of man, as in the case of this young prince, has often been so violent, as to break down every barrier; so that the children of the most godly parents have sometimes proved monsters of iniquity. One might have hoped that the example, instructions, and character of his father would have left some valuable impressions on his mind, especially when connected with the counsels of those worthy persons to whom, no doubt, his father had entrusted him. His guilt, however, was exceedingly aggravated by his apostacy.

From the atrocity of his conduct, what could be expected but consequences the most signally destructive. But, "where sin abounded," there did "grace much more abound." Repentance, which is the gift of God, was remarkably conferred upon him; and he lived long enough after this happy change to evince, by his conduct, the reality of it, and thus, the severe chastisement of God, prov-

ed his choicest blessing.

The repentance of Manasseh, and the wonderful display of pardoning mercy towards him, are exceedingly instructive and encouraging. Let none despair. "There is forgiveness with the Lord that he may be feared." "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Thousands, probably, have derived hope from the example of Manasseh, and God has obtained a large revenue of praise and glory.

Amon, the son of Manasseh, succeeded him. He inherited the worst of his father's vices, and followed the illexample he had set him in the beginning of his reign. "He sacrificed unto all the carved images which his father had made, and served them." Manasseh, it seems, had failed in one part of his duty, when he suppressed idolworship—he neglected to "burn the images with fire," as the law required, \* so that his son, who knew where to find these images, made use of them again.

Amon imitated the vices, but not the repentance and reformation of his father, in consequence of which Divine vengeance pursued him, and put a speedy issue to his reign, by permitting his servants to conspire against and assassinate him. He rebelled against God, and his own subjects rebelled against him. Herein God was righteous, but they were wicked, and the conspirators were, very

justly, put to death by the people.

Josiah, the son of Amon, ascended the throne at the early age of eight years. This was the prince, who was, by name, predicted to reign over Judah, about three hundred years before his birth: for "a man of God," in the presence of Jeroboam, at Bethel, made this public declaration. "O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord, Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee, shall he offer the priests of the high-places, that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee," 2 Chron. xiii. 2.

This youthful prince gave such early tokens of a pious disposition, that the Lord took him into his immediate care, and he formed his conduct from the example of his most pious predecessors. In the eighth † year of his reign, he not only destroyed the idols and altars of Baal, but the altar at Bethel, and those that were in the high-places, with all other things that tended to idolatry. And to shew his contempt of Bethel, where Jeroboam had set up one of the calf-idols, he sent the ashes of the idola-

<sup>\*</sup> Required. Deut. vii. 5.

<sup>+</sup> Eighth. See 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3.

trous things, that he had burnt, thither. And, to be satisfied in a thorough purgation of the idolatrous worship, he visited Bethel in person, where, after many expressions of zeal for the service of the true God, he not only deposed the false priests, but seeing many monuments of the dead in the mount, he ordered the bones to be taken out of them, and burnt upon one of the altars. But by the inscription, discovering the monument of the man \* of God that came from Judah to declare against the altar at Bethel, he would not permit his remains to be disturbed. Josiah carried this reformation through all the cities of Samaria that were subject to the crown of Judah. And wherever he found any priests of the Levitical order, who had sacrificed to idols, he deposed them from their sacerdotal office; and sacrificed the false priests upon their own altars, and burnt their bones there. How wonderful is that Divine prescience, which sees, through ages to come, all things that shall come to pass; and what a fresh confirmation must this fulfilment of the prophecy give to the truth of Revelation, and the necessity of worshipping Jehovah alone!

And yet, it should seem, that the people in general, imbibed but little of that zeal by which their gracious sovereign was so eminently distinguished. While Josiah was diligently engaged in restoring the true worship, the people discovered much indifference and reluctance, so that the exercise of his royal power was needful to compel them. So dangerous are ill habits, and difficult to be shaken off. Of this the prophet Jeremiah † heavily complained.

This pious prince having so happily carried on the reformation in the distant parts of the kingdom, had ordered the temple at Jerusalem to be repaired and cleansed of all the remains of idolatry; and having lodged the money which the officers, by his command, had collected

<sup>\*.</sup> Man, &c. See 1 Kings xiii. 31. 2 Kings xiii. 18. 1 Kings xiii. 11.

<sup>†</sup> Jeremiah. See Chap. iii. 4, 5.

for this work, in the temple, whilst Hilkiah the highpriest was locking up the money, he found the book \* of the law, which being brought to the king, and read by Shaphan the chancellor to him, he rent his robes, and immediately commanded Hilkiah, and the princes of the kingdom, to go and inquire of the Lord for him and themselves what they should do, lest God's wrath should be executed on them for the wickedness of their predecessors, who had so flagrantly disobeyed the words of the law. Upon which Hilkiah, attended with the principal ministers, went to Huldah† the prophetess, the wife of Shallum, ‡ keeper of the wardrobe, who dwelt in

<sup>\*</sup> Book. This was the book of Deuteronomy, or rather the whole Pentateuch, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14, which Moses, by the command of God, had laid up in the ark. Which book having been so neglected by Manasseh and Amon, it was looked upon as an extraordinary thing to find it in the temple. For those two impious kings had burnt or suppressed all the holy books they could meet with. So that king Josiah, as yet, had not the book of the law; for when Shaphan the chancellor read it before the king, he was so concerned that he had been ignorant of it all this while, that in grief he rent his robes: though some are of opinion, that his grief proceeded from the heavy judgments pronounced therein against the transgressors of it.

<sup>+</sup> Huldah. She was a woman very much reverenced and esteemed for her age, wisdom, and piety; as we read of other women before, viz. Deborah, Judg. 4, and Hannah the mother of Samuel, 1. 1. c. 2. And therefore there is no ground for thinking it strange, that at a time when there were men prophets, and so eminent as Jeremiah and Zephaniah, king Josiah should send his ministers to inquire at the mouth of a woman. Besides, as St. Jerom, 1. 2, contra Pelag. well observes, God in directing them to consult a woman on so solemn and important an occasion, might doit, as a secret reprehension for their own want of sanctity; for though Ieremiah the prophet was then in being, and prophesied, yet possibly he might be at some distance from Jerusalem; (for as he observes, ch. i. v. 1, he dwelt at Anathoth, three miles from Jerusalem) and besides, as others observe, he might possibly be engaged in admonishing and instructing part of the other ten tribes; so that the king, being impatient to know what to do to avert the judgments threatened in the book of the law against the violaters of it, (as they all at that time were) took the speediest way, and, as it proved, the best, for satisfaction in this case.

<sup>‡</sup> Shallum. The Jews say, that this Shallum was the uncle of Jeremiah's father.

the college\* in Jerusalem: and having imparted their business to her, she told them, that the evils threatened in the book of the law would soon fall on the house of Judah; but as to the king, because he had humbled himself, when he heard the judgments denounced against the people, he should die in peace, and see none of the evils which God intended to bring upon Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it.

With this answer they returned to the king, who thereupon assembled the people, and went with them to the temple; where, when he had distinctly read to them the words of the book of the law, he entered into a covenant to observe all that was contained in it, and engaged all the people to stand to that covenant. Then he kept the passover, with such state and solemnity, as had never been observed from the days of Samuel† to that time.‡

These transactions, from the finding the book of the law, to the keeping the passover, were in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign; from which time to his thirty-first year, which was his last, we have no account of him,

<sup>\*</sup> College. That is, in the Second City, near the second wall of the city (for in those days great towns had three walls.) The Chaldee paraphrase calls this second city, a house of learning, or school; and Vatablus says, it held the second place of dignity next to the temple, and in which the prophets and doctors lived; others, that it was a school of profane learning, which is very likely at this time, when there were no books of the law in being, that they knew of.

<sup>+</sup> Samuel. See 2 Chron. xxxv. 18.

<sup>†</sup> Time. Ignorance of the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures of truth, will ever be favourable to the progress of iniquity, for if the solemn threatenings of God against sin are unknown, there is no effectual barrier to restrain men from it. It should therefore be considered as one of the distinguishing blessings of Britain, that by means of printing, a copy of the Bible may be procured by almost every individual; and were this impracticable, the public reading of the Scriptures in all the churches must preserve all, but the wilfully irreligious, from absolute ignorance of the mind and will of God.

but are referred to the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. The last act of this king was his opposing Necho king of Egypt, who marching through Josiah's country to attack Carchemish, a place belonging to the king of Babylon,\* Josiah immediately marched against him. The Egyptian king hearing this, sent ambassadors to desire him to desist; for he declared he came not to invade his territories, but to do himself justice on the king of Babylon; assuring him at the same time, that what he did was by instruction† from God. But Josiah, having so far advanced with his army, would not believe‡ the Egyptian king, for he did not know that this was of the Lord, otherwise than as king Necho told him, whom, as an invading enemy, he thought he was not bound to believe; and therefore resolving to expel him, he dis-

<sup>\*</sup> Babylon. He is called king of Assyria, 2 Kings xxiii. 29, but that cannot be properly meant so; for at that time Assyria was under Nabopollasar, (who is called Nebuchodonosor, senior) king of Babylon, who was king of Babylon and Assyria too. Besides, Asarhaddon was the son of Sennacherib, who reigned but ten years after the defeat of his army by the angel in Judea, the last king of Assyria, properly speaking. So that it was against Nabopollasar that Pharaoh Necho went, when king Josiah opposed his passage through the country.

<sup>†</sup> Instruction, &c. This, as St. Jerome says, was by word of mouth to the king of Egypt by Jeremiah the prophet, and that Josiah lost his life in that action, for not obeying the word of the Lord. This is the more probable, as the Lord had often by his prophets admonished kings who were strangers to the law.

<sup>‡</sup> Believe. It is not reasonable to suppose, that Necho king of Egypt being to pass with his armythrough king Josiah's country, Josiah not understanding his intent in this expedition, might suspect he had a design upon him; and therefore went out with an army to stop him, being unwilling to trust a foreign power in his country. But it is plain, that by this unadvised and wilful act of his, in going to fight with the king of Egypt, without any other cause than his own suspicion of that prince's invading him, though the Egyptian told him he had no design on him, and that what he did was by the advice of God, shortened his own life, and deprived himself of the benefit of that part of the divine promise by the prophetess Huldah, that he should go to his grave in peace, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 28.

guised himself, and in the valley of Megiddo drew up his army to fight the Egyptian; who was not unprepared to receive him. The two armies engaged, and the action grew so hot, that the Egyptian archers, discovering Josiah, notwithstanding his disguise, plied that quarter where he fought so warmly with their arrows, that, at last, one proved the messenger of death to him. Josiah finding himself wounded, bid his charioteer drive him out of the field, who putting him into another chariot, brought him to Jerusalem, where he soon died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his fathers. The death of this excellent prince was lamented by all his subjects; but by none so much as the prophet Jeremiah; who, upon that occasion, composed the greatest part of that mournful song, which is called "The Lamentations of Jeremiah," wherein he foretold the miseries that would fall upon the people after the death of Josiah. And in so great a veneration was the memory of this good king held, that upon all mournful occasions afterwards, the singing men and women were obliged to commemorate the untimely death. of good king Josiah: which lasted an hundred years after, even to the prophet Zechariah's \* time. Though this Monarch had endeavoured by his own pious example, by wholesome advice, pressing instances, threatenings and force, to reclaim his people; yet the Lord, who well knew the obstinacy of their nature, before Josiah's death, declared,† he would remove Judah out of his sight, as he had done Israel, (who was now in captivity) and would reject the city of Jerusalem, which he had formerly chosen, and the temple in which he said, that his name should remain.

<sup>\*</sup> Zechariah. Who remembered it, by comparing the mourning which he then prophesied should in after times be in Jerusalem, to the mourning of Hadadrimmon, in the valley of Megiddo, which was the place where Josiah received his mortal wound.

<sup>†</sup> Declared. See 2 Kings xxiii. 26, 27. From hence it is, that the prophets of that time complained so grievously of the people, and denounced the

The prophet Nahum, the Elkeshite, (so called in the title of his prophecy, either because he was of the town of Elkesha, in the tribe of Judah, or that it was the name of his family) is supposed to have lived and prophesied about this time. It is certain he prophesied after the captivity of the ten tribes, and before that of Judah; which last he foretold in his first chapter, and the destruction of Nineveh in those that follow. Tremellius and Junius refer him to the latter part of Josiah's reign. Which scems the more likely, as being nearer to the destruction of Nineveh, and the Assyrian monarchy, to which Nahum's prophecy more particularly related. Nor did this prophet only prophesy against Nineveh, but the prophet Zephaniah also, who began to prophesy in the days of Josiah king of Judah, Zeph. i. 1, and prophesied directly against Assyria in general, and of the destruction of Nineveh in particular, ch. ii. v. 13, &c.

And now we are speaking of the time in which some of the prophets lived, it may not be amiss to inform the reader of the reason why their writings are misplaced: for in the Bible they are not arranged according to the order of time in which they delivered them. This is supposed to have happened through the negligence of the priests in those days, who had the charge of registering and keeping them. For the manner was, when any prophet had written a prophecy, he caused it to be fixed to the gate of the temple, where it remained for certain days, that all might read and take notice of it. And after it had stood there the appointed time, the priests took it into the temple to record it in a book; but for want of due care to enter them in course, as they were written,

judgments of the Lord against them; even to the destruction of their city, and their own captivity: as did Jeremiah in the fourth, fifth, sixth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth chapters of this prophecy, and the prophet Zephaniah in his. With whom may be joined the prophet Habakkuk, who is supposed to have lived in the latter part of Jesiah's reign, or under his son's, a little before their captivity by the Chaldeans, which he foretold, Hab. i. from v. 5 to 12.

they left them in that disorderly manner, in which we now have them. But besides that, it must be considered, that several of the prophets, especially Jeremiah; Ezekiel and Daniel, wrote in very troublesome times; Ezekiel and Daniel, when in captivity at Babylon; and Jeremiah, when all things both in Church and state were in the greatest confusion and disorder at Jerusalem; and the first copy of his book was destroyed by king Jehoiakim, Jer. xxxvi. 23, so that it is not to be wondered at, that they are so misplaced, but rather ought thankfully to be acknowledged, that we have them at all. The account of time also, and computation of years, wherein some great events took place, and are mentioned by the prophets, are so differently related, that it is difficult, and, sometimes, scarcely possible to reduce them to a certainty.

Upon the death of Josiah, his son Jehoahaz was proclaimed and anointed king; but his reign was short, lasting but three months: for the king of Egypt improving his victory at Megiddo, deposed Jehoahaz, and set up Eliakim, Jehoahaz's elder brother, changing his name to Jehoiakim. Then making the crown of Judah tributary to Egypt, he obliged the country to pay him a hundred talents of silver, and one of gold; which money Jehoiakim raised by a general tax upon the land, rating every man

according to his ability.\*

Jehoahaz being deposed, the king of Egypt loaded him with irons, and left him at Riblah, a city of Syria, while he pursued his expedition against the Assyrians,† and afterwards, at his return he took him along with him to Egypt, where he soon died.‡ And now Jehoiakim

<sup>\*</sup> Ability. See 2 Kings xxiii. 35. It is very probable the prophet Jeremiah had regard to this taxation, when in his mournful complaint he said of Jerusalem, "She that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!" Lam. i. 1.

<sup>†</sup> Assyrian, or rather Babylonian, as we have observed in our note on the word Babylon in a preceding page.

<sup>‡</sup> Died. This the prophet Jeremiah foretold, ch. xxii. v. 10, 11, 12, where he bids the king and people of Judah, "not weep for the dead, (meaning Josiah)

being placed on the throne of Judah by Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, instead of taking warning by the manifest judgments which God had inflicted on his predecessors, imitates them in the worst of their wicked actions; notwithstanding which, though he deserved immediate punishment, God in mercy, to reclaim him and his people, sent his servant, the prophet Jeremiah, to admonish and exhort them to repentance, and assure them, that if they persisted in their wicked way of living, he would make the temple like the house of Shiloh,\* and the city of Jerusalem a curse† to all nations. This so enraged the priests and false prophets, that they caused the people to seizet Jeremiah, and brought him before the princes of Judah in the temple, who were so far from pronouncing the sentence of death against him, as the priests and false prophets had done already, that they unanimously acquitted him, saying, "This man is not worthy of " death, for he hath spoken to us in the name of the "Lord our God." And to confirm this their judgment, they urged as a precedent, the prophet Micah, who predicted the destruction of Jerusalem before king Hezekiah with impunity. To balance which, they urged a later precedent of one Urijah, a prophet of the Lord, who for prophesying against the city and whole land was by king Jehoiakim put to death. But it pleased God to raise up for Jeremiah a powerful friend in the person of Ahikam, one of the king's counsellors, who protected him from the malice of the priests, and rage of the peo-

but for him that goeth away, for he shall return no more, nor see his native country." For, said he, "Thus saith the Lord concerning Shallum (which was the right name of Jehoahaz, Jer. xxii. 11.) the son of Josiah, king of Judah, who reigned instead of Josiah his father, and who went forth out of this place, he shall not return hither any more."

<sup>\*</sup> Shilob. The place where the ark had abode more than three hundred years; yet he had given it up to utter destruction.

<sup>+</sup> Curse. Or, rather a pattern for cursing.

<sup>†</sup> Seize. See Jeremiah xxvi. 8.

ple. He being thus secured by this good man Ahikam,

went on more boldly in the work of the Lord.

Soon after Jehoiakim was made king, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon and Assyria, to revenge the late expedition of Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt against Carchemish, having gathered a large army, attacked the king of Egypt there, and routed him, taking from him all the country that lies between the river Euphrates \* and the Nile. After which he made an easy conquest of Judah; for he besieged Jerusalem, and took it, and carried the king and part of the vessels of the temple to Babylon. Where, after he had continued a prisoner for some time, he restored † him to his crown, on condition that he should become tributary to him. In the fourth year of his reign, Jeremiah delivered another message from the Lord to the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem; in which he positively assured them that since no admonitions and warnings would affect them, the Lord would bring Nebuchadnezzar his servant, ‡ with all the northern nations that were subject to him, against the land of Judah, and the city of Jerusalem, and would make them

<sup>\*</sup> Euphrates. See 2 Kings xxiv. 7.

<sup>†</sup> Restored. This is not expressly mentioned in the Holy Scripture, yet some passages give a hint that way: and as it is the common opinion, so it may somewhat help to make out the time of his reign, and give more room for the prophecies that belong to it, which are many, for he reigned eleven years. At this time, and also with him, it is thought, (and with great reason,) that the prophet Daniel, with his three companions, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, (who were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) were carried to Babylon, Dan. i. vi. For Daniel, ch. i. v. 1, says, when Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiakim, and the vessels of the temple, he spake unto Ashpenaz, the master of the Eunuchs, that he should bring with him to Babylon some of the children of Israel, of the seed of the king, and of the princes, such as were well-favoured, and without blemish; of good parts, and well educated; that being instructed in the language and learning of the Chaldeans, they might be fit to serve the king in his palace: and that the Eunuch in consequence made choice of those four, Dan. i. 3, 4, 6.

<sup>‡</sup> Servant. See Jeremiah, xxv. 9.

serve the king of Babylon seventy \* years. Yet to let them see that he would not, even then, give them quite up, he told them that at the expiration of the seventy years he would punish the Assyrians and Chaldeans, and all the other nations that had afflicted them, for their ini-

guities.

Jehoiakim, having continued three years in subjection to Nebuchadnezzar, in the fourth, refused any longer submission to him. Upon which, Nebuchadnezzar ordered him to be attacked by some Chaldean troops, joined by the Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites. lasted some time, during which God frequently admonished Jehoiakim and his people, by various means, to return to their duty. The first of which was this: the approach of Nebuchadnezzar's army having driven the Rechabites † from their habitation, they fled to Jerusalem The Lord intending by these to convince and reprove Jehoiakim and the Jews, he commanded Jeremiah the prophet to bring them into an apartment in the temple, and to offer them wine; which they refused, alledging that it was contrary to their institution, which they had hitherto religiously observed. The prophet commended their obedience, and promised them a reward from God; and applying this to the Jews, he reproached them, who were the peculiar people of the Lord, for being less obedient to him, than the poor Rechabites were to the appointment of their ancestor. But this method not having the intended effect, the Lord commanded Jeremiah to make a book, and to write in it all the prophecies which the Lord had given him against Israel and Judah, from his beginning to prophecy; in order to see if the Jews, upon hearing all the judgments summed up together against them for their disobedience,

<sup>\*</sup> Seventy. See Jeremiah xxv. 11.

<sup>†</sup> Rechabites. They were the posterity of Rechab, who came from Jethro, or Hobab, the Kenite, and by the institution of Jonadab their founder, were obliged to build no houses, but to dwell in tents, and to drink no wine.

would return to their duty, that he might forgive them. In compliance with this command, Jeremiah employed Baruch as his Amanuensis, to write what he should dictate to him; and when it was finished, the prophet ordered Baruch to take it, and because he was shut \* up, that he might not enter into the house of the Lord, to go and read it to the people in the temple upon the Fast-day. † Baruch pursues his instructions, and going to the temple, read what he had written in the book. This was done in Gemariah's apartment, and afterwards in the secretary's office, before all the princes; who being satisfied that what Baruch read was the prophet Jeremiah's inditing, they advised him and Baruch to withdraw to some place of security, till they knew the king's pleasure concerning the book. They then secured the book in the secretary's office, and went and informed the king of what they had heard. Upon which, sending Jehudi, one of his attendants, for it, he commanded him to read it: but he had not proceeded far in it, when the king, impatient at the judgments that threatened him, took the

<sup>\*</sup> Shut up. It is uncertain what the prophet meant here, (Jeremiah xxxvi. v. 5,) by saying, "He was shut up." Some say he was shut up in prison by the malice of the priests, who, no doubt, were malicious enough to do so: but the contrary appears from v. 19, where the princes advised him and Baruch to hide themselves, which they did, v. 26. Tremellius and Junius suppose three ways of his being shut up, and leave us to take which of the three we like best. The first is that the king had forbidden him to go into the temple to speak to the people: but the prophets of God did not use to observe such prohibitions of their prophetic ministry. The second is, that the chief priests had excommunicated him, and therefore he might not go. But that, in all probability, he would have less regarded, for the same reason. The third is, that God, to provide for the safety of his prophet, and to punish the people, would not let him go amongst them. This of the three seems the most probable, and so his being shut up was by a restraint in his spirit or mind.

<sup>†</sup> Fast-Day.. This, it seems, was a Fast of their own appointing, as was usual when they feared war, or any great plague from God, as now they did by the Babylonians.

book out of his hand, and cut it into pieces, and, notwithstanding the importunity of some of the first persons of his court, he threw it into the fire, where it was burned. And to shew his want of penitence, he dispatched officers to apprehend the prophet Jeremiah and his amanuensis, Baruch; but Providence had secured them. This wilful act of Jehoiakim, in burning the roll, so provoked the Lord, that he commanded the prophet to provide another, and write the same words in it that were in the first, with this addition, that Jehoiakim should have none to sit on the throne of David, and that his dead body should be cast out, in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost, and that he would bring upon the inhabitants of Judah all the evils pronounced against them. And to let him see that God was in earnest, he permitted this obstinate prince to fall into the hand of Nebuehadnezzar, who put him in irons, intending to have carried him to Babylon, if he had not died on the way.

To Jehoiakim succeeded his son Jehoiakin, \* a youth of about eighteen years of age: who treading in the steps of his wicked father, the Lord sent him his doom by the prophet Jeremiah, † which was soon executed upon him; for in the fourth month of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar having conceived some ill suspicion of this young prince, who was viciously inclined, came and besieged Jerusalem in person, at the head of a powerful

<sup>\*</sup> Jeboiakin. In 1 Chron. iii. 16, he is called Jechoniah. In 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9, he is said to be but eight years old when he began to reign, and in 2 Kings xxiv. 8, he is said to be eighteen. The latter is the most reasonable, because of the message which God sent to him by the prophet Jeremiah, which he would scarce have done to a child of eight years old. And as to the book of Chronicles saying he was eight years old, it must be supposed that his father had created him his partner in the kingdom at eight years of age, out of jealousy, that if he (Jehoiakim) should die, and leave his son young, his brother Mattaniah might take the advantage of his childhood, and put him by the crown.

<sup>†</sup> Jeremiab. See ch. xxii. v. 24.

army. Jehoiakin finding himself too weak to defend the place, surrendered himself, his mother, his princes, officers, and servants, to the king of Babylon, who carried them all away prisoners, taking with them all the treasure of the temple and the royal palace, and all the useful artificers; leaving none but the poorest sort of people behind.

The conqueror having thus disposed of the captives, above seven thousand in number, substituted to Jehoiakin his uncle Mattaniah, the third son of good king Josiah, whose name he changed to Zedekiah, who though he had seen the ruin of his two brothers, Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim, and of his nephew Jehoiakin, yet persisting in their wicked ways, God sent the prophet Jeremiah to admonish him, who related to him the vision\* of the two baskets of figs, the one good, and the other naught. By the first, representing the captivity of those that were in Babylon, which being limited to a time, was for the good of their posterity: the latter, the condition of Zedekiah, and those that remained in the land of Judah, all which the Lord threatened to deliver up to their enemies, and to make them a reproach and curse in all places; adding, that the Lord would send the sword, famine, and pestilence, among them, till they were consumed.

In the reign of Jehoiakim, the prophet Jeremiah,† by God's command, had made bonds and yokes, and put them upon his neck in token of the bondage with which the Lord had threatened Judah, and other nations; and now he was commanded to send the bonds and yokes to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Zidon, to let them know that God had given their countries to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, his servant,‡ and to warn them of their idolatry, and to submit to him. But to Zedekiah, king of Judah, the prophet went in person, and advised him to submit to the king of Babylon, and not

<sup>\*</sup> Vision. See Jeremiah xxiv. 1, &c. + Feremiah. See ch. xxvii. v. 2.

‡ Servant. See Jeremiah xxvii. 6.

to believe the false prophets, who flattered him with hopes of Judah's recovering her former state, and fore-told the destruction of Babylon. Among these was Hananiah, who gave Jeremiah much trouble: however, when the Lord commanded him, he readily went on his prophetic ministry. And taking the opportunity of Zedekiah's sending an embassy to Babylon, he sent a letter to the captive priests and people, to admonish them, that their captivity was for their benefit, and that their posterity should return; but that God would severely judge those that were left at Jerusalem, both king and people, with sword, pestilence, and famine, and afterwards deliver them up to their enemies, to be a reproach and curse among all nations.

Upon the receipt of this letter, Shemaiah, a popular man among the captive Jews at Babylon, took upon him to write to Zephaniah, who was next in place to Seraiah the high-priest at Jerusalem, and to the rest of the priests there, representing Jeremiah as a madman, and a prophet of his own making, and advising them to confine Jeremiah hearing this letter of Shemaiah read, was commanded by God to send again to the captives of Babylon, to let them know that the Lord would punish Shemaiah and his posterity, because he had prophesied falsely to them. And to warn those who still remained at Jerusalem, God commanded Jeremiah to shew them by the emblem\* of the potter's bottle, that it was in his power to destroy the despisers of his word. But not withstanding this, and the threats of the Lord by his prophets, they desperately resolvet to go on in their own ways, and plot against Jeremiah, abusing him with words and blows, and putting him into the stocks.

About this time was Ezekiel‡ called to the office of a prophet, and made to see the visions of God. He having

<sup>\*</sup> Emblem. See Jeremiah xviii. + Resolve. See Jer. xviii. 12, 18.

<sup>‡</sup> Ezekiel. He was a priest, and carried to Babylon among the captives of Jehoiakim.

been instructed and encouraged in the service of God, by the glorious discoveries\* made to him, prophesied the same things at Babylon that Jeremiah did at Jerusalem; which confirming Jeremiah's prophecies, was a great comfort to him. Thus did these two great prophets visit the people with several warnings, endeavouring, by very significant emblems, and direct prophecies, to reclaim them. But they still persisting in their obstinacy and disobedience, God brought upon them those judgments he had so often by his prophets threatened, and which Zedekiah's impiety hastened: for he revolting, in the ninth year of his reign, from Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him king, provoked the haughty monarch to march with a vast army, and besiege Jerusalem. Where we will leave the Jews, and look back a little to an action which happened in another part of the kingdom of Judah, wherein Bethulia owed its deliverance to the policy and courage of the heroine Judith. †

<sup>\*</sup> Discoveries. Sce Ezekiel i. 2, 3, 4, 5, 8.

<sup>+</sup> Judith. Some modern critics have endeavoured to make the history of Judith pass for an allegory; but it has nothing of the air of fiction or parable. Both Jews and the ancient Christians looked upon it as a true history, though the former have not placed it among their canonical books. The author is not certainly known; but it is very probable that it was composed during the captivity, because it was written in the Chaldaic tongue. The original, from which were made the Greek versions, quoted by the fathers, and the Latin, done by St. Jerom, are lost. As to the time, it is most certain that it was before the burning of Jerusalem and the temple, and after the captivity in Jehoiakim's days; which appears from Judith iv. 3, where it is said, "They were newly returned from the captivity," which must be that in Jehoiakim's time, for that in Zedekiah's continued seventy years, before which Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had subdued Arphaxad, king of the Medes, and demolished Echatane. This Arphaxad, probabiy, was Phrartes, or Aphraartes, who, as Herodotus tells us, was defeated by the Assyrians (who were then subject to the king of Babylon) and perished with his army. Which agrees with what is said in the first chapter of Judith, that Arphaxad was overcome by Nebuchadnezzar, who returned to Nineveh, which was the capital of the kingdom of Assyria. But to come more precisely to the time of Holofernes,

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon and Nineveh, having defeated and taken Arphaxad, king of the Medes, proposed to himself to subdue the nations of Asia to the westward: on which expedition he sent his general Holofernes with a mighty army, who, spreading terror in all parts, made himself master of Mesopotamia, Syria, Libya, and Cilicia, which voluntarily submitted to him. After these conquests he turned his arms to the country of Edom, where he found as little resistance. The Israelites taking the alarm, gathered what forces they had, possessed themselves of the mountains, and fortified their Holofernes, surprised that they should think of opposing his army, enquired of the Moabites and Ammonites what strength that people had, and what motive could induce them to stand out? Achior, chief of the Ammonites, in a few words told him the history of that nation; and having informed him how they had been sometimes protected, and sometimes abandoned by their God, concluded, that if they had offended their God, he would deliver them into his hands; but if they had not, their God would defend them, and that all his army would not be able to subdue them. Holofernes hearing this account, with great indignation caused Achior to be sent into Bethulia, which he besieged, intending to destroy

king Nebuchadnezzar's general, in the second chapter of Judith it is positively said, that Nebuchadnezzar put his general on this expedition in the first month of the eighteenth year of his reign, which was the ninth year of Zedekiah, king of Judah; so that the defeat of Holofernes and the siege of Jerusalem happened in the same year, though it must be supposed that the expedition against Bethulia was in the beginning of the year, and the siege at the end of it; for we read in the fifteenth of Judith, that Joakim the priest, with the elders, came from Jerusalem to salute Judith, and she returned to Jerusalem with them to give thanks, which could not be in the time of a siege. As for the Bethulians enjoying peace during Judith's life, it may be supposed that Nebuchadnezzar being employed two years in the siege of Jerusalem, might spend some years in reducing other parts of the country; and Bethulia being a place naturally strong, as situated in the mountainous part of the country, he was unwilling to weary his army before it, or make any attempt on it, till he had subdued the rest.

him when it was taken. The inhabitants of Bethulia seeing the number of the enemy, began to be alarmed, and were so pressing with Ozias the governor of the place, that to quiet them, he promised to surrender the town, if in five days they were not relieved. But that which pressed them most was the want of water, for otherwise the town, by reason of its high situation, was inaccessible. This want of water was occasioned by the advice of the Idumeans and others, whom Holofernes had subdued, who told him there was no way of reducing the place, but by cutting off the water at the foot of the mountains, which supplied them. This advice Holofernes, pursued, which made Ozias the governor, in despair, promise the people he would hold out no longer than

five days.

At that time there dwelt in Bethulia a woman named Judith, as eminent for virtue and piety as for the great wealth and possessions her husband had left her. She, hearing what the governor had done to quiet the people, sent for him and the leading men of the city, and in their presence reproved him for it, assuring them that God, by her, would find out an expedient to deliver them; but enjoined them not to enquire into her project, for she declared she would not inform them. Upon this they left her, wishing her good success. Judith was sensible of the charms of her person, for she was very beautiful, and with these she proposed to captivate and betray the proud general. Having therefore addressed herself in prayer to God, she adds all the embellishments of art and dress, and attended only by her maid, makes the best of her way to the Assyrian camp. Being come to the out-guard, she was stopped, and asked who, and whence she was? She told them, she was a Hebrew who had fled from her countrymen for protection, because she was sensible that her fate was near. Her dress and beauty commanded respect, and they immediately provided a chariot for her and her maid, and a guard of a hundred choice men to conduct her to the general's tent. Where being arrived, and waiting without the tent, till the general was ready to receive her, the officers and

soldiers with much pleasure surveyed and admired her beauty. Being introduced, Holofernes met her at the tent-door, and seating himself under a rich canopy of state, he assured her of his protection, and desired an account of the cause of her visit. After due respect paid to the presence of so great a person, she expressed herself to him as she had done to the advanced guard; and addressed herself so artfully to him in words that admitted a double meaning, as,\* "That the Lord had sent her to "perform such an enterprise with him, as would ex-"cite the wonder of the world when it was known," so that he became enamoured with her wit and beauty. Holofernes fondly concluding that the God of the Hebrews was angry with them, which he, through mistake, imagined the cause of Judith's quitting them, gave her leave to go and come whither, and when she pleased, without controul. Judith was a pious woman, and a strict observer of the ceremonies of her religion; and to prevent any pollution by eating with the Assyrians, when Holofernes pressed her to eat as he did, she declined it, telling him, that she had brought enough to serve her till she had finished what she came about. Thus she continued three days in the Assyrian camp, and on the fourth day Holofernes invited her to an entertainment, where she drank of his wine, but eat only what she had ordered her maid to provide. The general was so well pleased with her conversation, that he drank very liberally, and proposed to pass the night with the beautiful stranger; but he became so intoxicated, that he fell upon his bed fast asleep. Upon which Bagoas, the general's eunuch, dismissed all the company, except Judith, and then himself withdrew. Now was Judith's project ripe for execution; praying therefore to God to strengthen her in the performance of it, she approached the bed, and finding his senses quite locked up with wine, she drew his scimitar, and at two strokes cut off his head, which she immediately gave to her maid, whom she had ordered to attend

<sup>\*</sup> As. See Judith xi, 16.

her without. The maid put up the head in the bag in which she carried their provisions, and away they hasten towards the mountains of Bethulia. When they were come within hearing, Judith called to the watch to open the gates, and being admitted, the governor and people from all quarters of the town came thronging to see her; upon which she shewed them Holofernes's head, assuring them, that though she had ensnared him with her beauty, yet he had committed nothing immodest with her. dith well knowing the consternation into which the sudden death of Holofernes would put the Assyrian army, advised the Bethulians to take the advantage of it, and arm to pursue and kill them. They had great reason to observe her instructions, whose conduct had so far put them in the way for their deliverance. The besieged therefore immediately ran to arms, and to encourage them, Judith had ordered the head of Holofernes to be hung upon the wall in sight of the enemy. The Bethulians appearing in the passes of the mountains, the enemy's out-guards gave notice to their officers, and the officers sent to the general: upon which Bagoas, his eunuch, went to the tent, and knocking at the door, but having no answer, he opened it, and went in, where, to his great amazement and surprise, he saw the headless body of his master wallowing in his blood; missing Judith, who he thought had slept with Holofernes that night, he went to her tent; but not finding her there, he straightway concluded who was the author of this mischief and disgrace to the Assyrians. This dismal news soon spread through the camp, and occasioned such terror; that every one began to shift for himself, flying over the plains and mountains in the greatest confusion and disorder. The Bethulians took the advantage of this, and attacked them in small parties from several quarters, as did likewise all the neighbouring people, who, as well as those of Bethulia, enriched themselves greatly with the booty. After this Joakim came to Bethulia, attended with the chief men of Israel, and having saluted Judith, and complimented her for her glorious conduct and policy, she returned with them to Jerusalem,

where they all gave public thanks, and offered burnt-offerings; but Judith's offering was the plunder of Holofernes's tent, with all his equipage, with which the soldiers had presented her. After this she returned to Bethulia, and died in a good old age, being a hundred and five years old. Return we now to the siege of Jeru-

salem.

The Jews being closely besieged, the prophet Jeremiah frequently applied to the king, acquainting him with his fate, and that of the city; with which Zedekiah was at length so much affected, that he and his people, to shew some token of reformation, agreed to proclaim a manumission, or liberty to all Hebrew servants of both sexes, which they ratified by the ancient and usual solemnity of dividing\* a calf into two parts, and passing between them. But this they soon retracted; for upon the coming of Hophra, † king of Egypt, to the relief of Jerusalem, the Chaldeans‡ raised the siege of the city, and went to fight the Egyptians; and the people of Jerusalem, who had made the proclamation of liberty, thinking that Nebuchadnezzar's army had fled for fear of the Egyptian army, obliged the servants to return every one to his respective duty and service. This prevarication so incensed the Lord, that he repeats his former judgments of sword, famine, and pestilence, by his servant Jeremiah. Shortly after which, Zedekiah sent Jehucal and Zephaniah the priest, to the prophet Jeremiah, to desire him to pray to the Lord for them. But he returned answer, that they were mistaken in concluding that the Chaldeans were gone; and supposing that the Chaldeans

<sup>\*</sup> Dividing. Jeremiah xxxiv. 9, which imported a sort of imprecation on themselves, that they might be cut asunder in case they did not observe and perform the covenant into which they then entered.

<sup>+</sup> Hophra. He is called so by the prophet Jeremiah, ch. xliv. ver. 33; by others Apries, by Eusebius, Vaphres.

<sup>‡</sup> Chaldeans. They were part of Nebuchadnezzar's army.

should be worsted, so that none but wounded men should

be left, yet they would fire the city.

After this, the prophet seeing the siege raised for the present, thought fit to take this opportunity of the gates being open, to go into the country; but being stopped by the guard, was seized as a deserter, and carried before the princes, who were in such a rage, that they fell upon him, beat him, and committed him to prison. From whence he was, by the king's order, released, and brought to his house, where, between themselves, the king asked him if he had any word from the Lord concerning him? "Yes," replied Jeremiah, "for thou shalt "be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon." Then expostulating with the king on the hardship of his case, who, for telling the truth in the siege of the city, and other matters, was punished and confined, while the false prophets were excused, he desired the king to put him in a more commodious prison; he was accordingly removed, and better care taken of him so long as any provision was left.

The good old prophet, though in prison, spoke what the Lord commanded him; and all that he said being a constant denunciation of the heavy judgments of God against the city and people of Jerusalem, particularly that it should be taken by the king of Babylon, and that they should languish under those three plagues, famine, pestilence, and sword; the princes were so enraged, that they went to the king, and remonstrated with him on the subject, declaring that the prophet ought to be put to death, as his speeches discouraged both the soldiers and the people. The king, in this distress, not daring to contest with his people, who, upon every little occasion, were too apt to mutiny, allowed them to do what they pleased. Upon which, they took Jeremiah, and let him down by cords into a filthy miry dungeon, where he must inevitably have perished, had not God raised him up a friend in the person of Ebedmelech, a black eunuch, who interceded with the king for him, and procured him to be brought back to his former prison. For this courtesy, Jeremiah assured the charitable moor, that

when the city should be taken, he should not fall by the sword.

And now the king having the prophet near him again, he desired him not to hide any thing from him that he should ask. But the prophet, who had been ill treated before for speaking his mind so freely, began now to expostulate with him, and before he answered the king, he told him, that if he would promise\* not to put him to death, if what he should report to him did not please him, and that if he gave him good advice, he would observe it, he would freely answer him. To the first the king answered positively, that no one should hurt him; but as to the second he was silent. However, the prophet ventured to advise him to surrender to the king of Babylon, with assurance of good quarter for himself and family. The king scrupled at it, but the prophet persisted; and at the breaking off of the discourse, the king obliged him to secrecy, which for his own sake he observed; for if the princes had known what had passed between him and the king, it might have cost the prophet his life.

The siege drawing near to a close, the people, through the scarcity of provisions, were reduced to extremity, being forced to rake the very dunghills for food, and at last to feed on one another.† In this sad condition, the city was taken by storm, in the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign. The Chaldeans having possessed themselves of one gate, king Zedekiah, with the few forces he had left, endeavoured to escape at another gate; but the city being enclosed on every side with the enemy's army, he had not gone far before he was seized, and the few that were with him dispersed. The wretched king, thus taken, was carried to Nebuchadnezzar, who was then at Riblah, where, to add to his misery, he saw his sons put to death before his face, and the princes of Judah, who

<sup>\*.</sup> Promisc. See Jeremiah xxviii. 16.

<sup>†</sup> Another. See Lament. iv. 4, 5, 10, and Ezek. v. 10.

had opposed his inclining to believe the prophet Jeremiah, were likewise slain. As for himself, the king of Babylon commanded his eyes to be put out, and binding him in fetters of brass, he carried him in triumph to Babylon, where he died in prison. The people being put to military execution, the enemy fell to plunder, and destroyed the place. This was executed with the utmost rage by Nebuzaradan, captain of the king of Babylon's guards, for he threw down the walls, burnt the temple and royal palace, and all the principal houses, and set the rest of the city on fire. Those that escaped the sword, with them that had deserted during the siege, were sent prisoners to Babylon; none but a few of the poorer sort being left to till the country. All the sacred vessels, utensils, and treasure of the temple, were carried off, together with the priests, and some officers that used to attend the service of the Lord.

The contemporary reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah, being somewhat intricate, from the manner in which they run into each other in the Sacred History, the following Table will exhibit an abstract of their several reigns, from the founding of Solomon's temple to the destruction of it at this period of the history.

ABSTRACT of the Reigns of the Kings of Judah and Israel, from the founding of Solomon's Temple in the year of the world 3983, to its final destruction, by Nebuchadnezzar. Containing the space of 423 years.

-								
4						•		
4	Years	Years	Kings	Kings	Years	Years	Prophets in their Reigns	
	before	of	of	of	of	before	and particular events.	
-	Christ.	Reign.	Judah.	Israel.	Reign.	Christ.	and particular events.	
٠		8		201401				
1	1011	4-36	Solomon.	Jeroboam I.	22	975	Nathan and Gad.	
-	975		Rehoboam.	Jeroboant 1.				
-	958	3						
-1	955	41	Asa,	Nadab.	1	953	30	
				Baasha.	23	952		
I				Elah.	- I	929		
				Zimri.	7 Days	928		
				Omri,	11 Yrs.	928		
	914	0.5	Tal-sambas	Ahab.	فابد	917 904	Elijah prophesied,	
	914	25	Jehosaphat.	Ahaziah.	1	897	Troy taken.	
Н				Jehoram.	11	896	Elijah translated. Elisha succeeds him.	
1	889	4	Jehoram.	ochoram.		030	Lifsha succeeds him.	
	885	1	Ahaziah.					
-	884	6	Athaliah.	Jehn.	28	884		
1	878	40	Joash.			870	HomerandHesiodlived.	
	856			Jehoahaz.	17	856		
	839	29	Amaziah.	Jehoash.	14	839		
-				Jeroboam II.	41	825	Jonah prophesied.	
	810	52	Azariah.	Interregnum.	6 Mo.	784	Amos, Hosea.	
				Zechariah.	1 Mo.	773		
				Shallum.	10 Yrs.	772	Jonah goes to Nineveh.	
-				Menahem.	2	762	1	
- 1				Pekaiah. Pekah.	20	760	Isa. began to prophesy.	
				I chair,		740	Micah prophesied.	
	758	16	Jotham.			1	First captivity of Israel	
							by Tiglath-Pileser.	
-							1	
	742	16	Ahaz.	Interregnum.	8	738		
				Hosea.	9	730	Micah.	
	726	29	Hezekiah.	1		701		
	698	29 55	Manasseh.			721	Second captiv. of Israel.	
	090	33	1.20110000110	100000000000000000000000000000000000000		677	Nahum prophesied.	
						1 011	Third captiv. of Israel, by Esarhaddon.	
	643	2	Amon.				feremiah, Habakkuk,	
	641	31	Josiah.				and Zephaniah.	
-	610	3 Mo.	Jehoahaz.				die Depitation.	
		11 Yrs.	Jehoiakim.				First captivity of Judah,	
		12					Daniel carried to Ba-	
	F00	0.35	Labainahir				bylon.	
	599	3 Mo.	Jehoiachin.				Second captivity of Ju-	
							dah.	
	500	71 37	Zedekiah.				Mordecai and Ezekiel	
	599	11 Yrs.	Ledekian.				carried away captives.	
							Jeremiah and Ezekiel.	
						•	Jeremian and Ezekier.	
	588 The Temple destroyed, and Judah with the remainder of Israel carried away to							
	Babylon, by Nebuchadnezar.							
	Babylon, by Nebuchadirezari							

The Number of the Kings of Judah, of the race and family of David, excepting Athaliah, who was daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, was 21. Average of their reigns in 423 years, 20 years and 52 days each. Number of the Kings of Israel in 254 years from the reign of Jeroboam I. to the third captivity under Hosea, 19. Average of their reigns, 13 years 98 days each.

COMPLETE

## HISTORY

OF THE

### Holy Bible.

BOOK THE SIXTH.

Before Nebuzaradan had commenced the demolition of the city, the king of Babylon having understood what pains the prophet Jeremiah had taken to incline the king of Judah and his princes to a timely surrender, and what hardships he had suffered for so doing, gave a strict charge\* to Nebuzaradan to pay particular attention to him, and to grant him whatever he should desire. But in the heat of the action he had neglected to inquire after him, and they who had the charge of transporting the captives, had carried him away among the rest as far as Ramah. Upon which, Nebuzaradan sent for him back, and gave him his liberty. Jeremiah understanding by Nebuzaradan, that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor of the land, he went to him, by Nebuzaradan's advice, and dwelt with him at Mizpah, as did several of king Zedekiah's officers, who upon the taking of the city had fled, and were dispersed about the country. Among these were Ishmael, who was of the royal blood, and Johanan and Jonathan, two brothers, and other

principal men. All of whom Gedaliah took into his protection, on condition, that they would be subject to the king of Babylon, giving them leave to settle in what towns they pleased, and to furnish themselves with win-The same liberty he gave to all the Jews that ter stores. returned from the countries, to which, in the common

danger, they had fled.

But notwithstanding the generosity of Gedaliah, Ishmael was discontented; for envying the promotion of Gedaliah, who was an obscure person in comparison of himself, he with ten more conspired to murder him, which base design was secretly encouraged by the king of Ammon. Johanan discovered this conspiracy to Gedaliah, and offered his service to dispatch Ishmael. The generous governor, who was a man of honour himself, and not ready to entertain ill thoughts of others, would not believe Johanan, nor permit him to kill Ishmael. But his incredulity soon cost him dear; for the conspirators pretending to pay a visit to the governor, murdered him; and to secure themselves, took advantage of the people's being unprovided for defence, fell upon them too, and slew not only the Jews, but the Chaldeans also. they kept so private for some days, that fourscore Israelites, who were carrying offerings and incense to Jerusalem,\* fell into their hands, whom they barbarously murdered, except ten, whom they saved for the purpose of discovering their treasures in the field.

Ishmael not thinking himself secure here, leaves Mizpah, and taking what people were left as captives with him, (among whom were king Zedekiah's daughters) † he makes the best of his way to the king of Ammon, who had put him upon this treacherous enterprise. But Johanan, having intelligence of the late massacre, collecting what forces he had, marched after Ishmael, whom he

<sup>\*</sup> Jerusalem. It is to be supposed that these Israelites had not heard that the temple and city were destroyed, when they came from home.

<sup>+</sup> Daughters. Sec Jeremiah xli. 10.

found at the pool of Gibeon. The people whom Ishmael had carried off from Mizpah, seeing Johanan and the rest come to rescue them, ran over to their deliverers; which Ishmael perceiving, fled, with only eight men in his company, to the Ammonites. Ishmael thus gone, Johanan and his company take up their dwelling at Chimham\* near Bethlehem, which they chose,† the rather, that if they should be attacked by the Chaldeans for Ishmael's conspiracy, they might the more readily take refuge

in Egypt.

Jeremiah the prophet having taken up his dwelling with Gedaliah at Mizpah, t was carried from thence by Ishmael the conspirator, after the death of the governor, among the rest of the captives; and Ishmael being routed, he accompanied Johanan to their new habitation at Chimham. Here Johanan and his company addressed the prophet, and intreated him to pray to the Lord for them, to direct them what course to take. The prophet promised them he would, and faithfully return them the answer which the Lord should give. Upon which they entered into a covenant of obedience to the prophet, and he supplicated God for them: but ten days elapsed before he obtained an answer; when calling Johanan and the people together, he told them, that if they would live in subjection to the king of Babylon, and tarry in Judea till his appointed time, the Lord would skreen them from all danger, and raise them up again; but if they offered to go to Egypt, the sword, famine and pestilence, should pursue them. This advice, being contrary to their inclinations, they refused to receive,

<sup>\*</sup> Chimbam. This place may be supposed from 2 Sam. xix. 38, to have been anciently given by king David to Chimham, the son of old Barzillai the Gileadite, and which yet bore his name, though near five hundred years after.

<sup>+</sup> Chose. See Jeremiah xli. 16.

<sup>†</sup> Mizpah. See Jer. xl. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Chimbam. See Jeremiah xlii. 12.

and rudely charged the prophet with speaking falsely in the name of the Lord; and notwithstanding he urged in his defence that they had dissembled with him, when they intreated him to pray to the Lord for them, and gave a confirmation of the judgments that would attend them, they persisted in their former resolution of going to Egypt, and removed thither with all the remnant of Judah, taking the men, women and children, with all the late king's daughters, the prophet Jeremial, and Baruch his scribe.

They had not been long in Egypt, before the Lord, by his prophet, admonished them of the destruction of that country, and the extirpation of their false gods, by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. But the stubborn Jews did not regard him, for they resolutely told him they would do what they thought fit, and would, according to the idolatry of the Egyptians, offer incense to the queen\* of heaven: the women, with equal insolence, said the same. This conduct provoked the Lord to denounce against them, by his prophet, the most fearful judgments† in positive terms: at the same time assuring them, that Pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt (under whose protection they lived secure, as they supposed) should be delivered into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, as Zedekiah had been before.

And ‡ now the prophet Jeremiah having discharged his duty to his own people the Jews, addressed himself, in the rest of his book, for the most part, to the gentiles: § as did his cotemporary, the prophet Eze-

<sup>\*</sup> Queen. By which is meant the moon at least, if not all the planets. See Jeremiah xliv. 17.

<sup>†</sup> Judgments. Jeremiah xliv. 26, 27.

<sup>‡</sup> And, &c. About this time both Jeremiah and his cotemporary Ezekiel, left off historical matter, and foretel the wickedness and misfortunes of the heathen.

Gentiles. Thus Jeremiah prophesied against Egypt, ch. xlvi. the Philistines, ch. xlvii. Moabites, ch. xlviii. Ammon, Edom, and other people, ch. xlix. Babylon, ch. l. and li. with some prophecies here and there interspersed; especially in ch. l. concerning the redemption of Israel.

kiel,\* who was earnestly engaged in the like service in Chaldea. In which prophetic office they continued till the time of their death.†

Truly honourable and dignified was the character supported by the prophet Jeremiah. He commenced his work at a very early age, and was indeed, sanctified and ordained to it from his birth. From a modest diffidence he would have excused himself from the arduous office, saying, 'Ah! Lord God! I cannot speak, for I am a child!' But his objections were over-ruled by the divine assurance that he should be duly qualified for, and assisted in his work. "I have made thee," said the Lord to him, "a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land: and they shall fight against

<sup>\*</sup> Ezekiel. He prophesied against the Ammonites, ch. xxv. against Tyrus, ch. xxvi. against those that supported her, and traded with her, ch. xxvii. against the prince of Tyrus, ch. xxviii. against Egypt, ch. xxix. xxx. xxxi. and xxxii. against the shepherds of Israel, ch. xxxiv. against mount Seir, or Edom, ch. xxxv. against the lofty ones of Israel, ch. xxxvi. with a promise of their restoration to their own country, by the emblem of the dry bones, ch. xxxvii. against other enemies of the church of God, under the name of Gog and Magog, ch. xxxviii. xxxix. And from thence he describes the rebuilding of the temple, as a sure confirmation to his captive countrymen, that their captivity should have an end, and that they should return to their own country.

<sup>†</sup> Death. The Holy Scripture makes no mention of the death of these two great prophets, either as to time, place, or manner. But St. Jerom, in the life of Jeremiah, and Dorotheus, bishop of Tyre, in his Synopsis of the lives and deaths of the prophets and apostles, says, that Jeremiah was stoned to death in Egypt by the people; most likely by his renegado countrymen the Jews, that fled to Egypt against his advice and God's command, and took him with them against his will. For the Egyptians being freed by the prophet's prayers from Crocodiles, which very much infested them, had him in very great honour and esteem, which they testified by burying him in one of the royal sepulchres. As for the prophet Ezekiel, he is said to have been slain in Chaldea, by a prince of the children of Israel, whom he reproved for worshipping images. Towards the latter end of their time, Obadiah prophesied. His prophecy is directed against Edom, the posterity of Esau, against whom those other two prophets also denounced the judgments of God, Jeremiah xlix. and Ezek. xxv.

thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee, to deliver thee." This promise was fulfilled, for he continued, amidst all dangers, inflexibly firm in the discharge of his duty; and the astonishing deliverances wrought for him in times of the most imminent danger, proved that God had not forsaken him. The example of Jeremiah encourages all the people of God, but especially his ministers, "to obey God rather than man," and to conduct themselves with wisdom, courage, patience, and fidelity, assured that he, whom they serve, is able to deliver, and will never leave nor forsake them."

Daniel,\* having been carried to Babylon among the captives in the first captivity of Judah, under Jehoiakim their king, with his three friends, was obliged to change his name, and they theirs, by order of Ashpenaz, master of the eunuchs. This was done in token of slavery: therefore they called Daniel, Belteshazzar; Hananiah, Shadrach; Mishael, Meshach; and Azariah, Abednego. Being bred up in the learning of the Chaldeans, in order to qualify them for the king's service, Daniel, who was descended of the royal blood of Judah, and his three friends, had their daily allowance of meat and wine ordered from the king of Babylon's table. But Daniel, being a devout observer of the religion of his country, reguested of the master of the eunuchs, that he and his friends might be excused from it, desiring only pulse and water, which he said was sufficient sustenance for them. This upon trial agreeing well with them, they had their liberty to eat it, without having other meat forced upon This religious abstinence appears to have been

<sup>\*</sup> Daniel. The Jews do not place him among the prophets, because he did not live after the manner of the other prophets. However, it cannot be denied that he was a prophet, and that what he wrote was a prophecy, as the Jews own. He prophesied at Babylon from the beginning of the captivity, till the reign of Cyrus, that is, above eighty years. We do not read that he returned into his country, and therefore suppose that he died at Babylon. His book is partly historical and partly prophetical.

pleasing and acceptable to their God; who, while they were pursuing their studies of the arts and sciences of the Chaldeans, furnished them with such an uncommon measure of understanding and knowledge, that, when at the end of three years, they were brought before the king, he found them by far to excel in wisdom all the Magi and Philosophers of his country; especially Daniel, to whom God imparted a wonderful faculty of understanding and interpreting dreams. A specimen of which he had soon an opportunity of displaying; for the king having a dream one night, it left such an impression on his spirits, as made him very uneasy; and that which added to his inquietude was, he could not recollect the substance of this dream.

Upon this, the most learned among the Chaldeans who pretended to divination were summoned; who excused themselves from telling the dream, but readily offered to interpret it, if he could recollect it. This was so far from satisfying the uneasy king, that it threw him into a rage, and he threatened them and their families with utter destruction, if they did not relate and interpret his forgotten dream. They still persisted in their inability to perform what he demanded, urging that it was the province of a Deity, and not of a man, so to divine; and that no king had ever before required such a thing of men of skill and learning. Nebuchadnezzar looking upon this as trifling with him, gave order that all who professed the magic art in his dominions should be destroyed.

Daniel and his three friends were now sought for, to be executed among the rest; but Daniel, addressing himself to the captain of the guard, to know the cause of this sudden decree, and the captain acquainting him with the whole matter, he went into the presence, and assured his Majesty that, if he would allow him time, he would both discover and interpret his dream. Daniel having obtained time, retired to his apartment, and communicated the whole affair to his companions Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, requesting them to unite with him in fervent prayer to God, that he would mercifully reveal

this great secret to them, that they might not perish. God was pleased immediately to answer their prayers, and in a vision revealed the important secret to Daniel; who, after a return of praise and thanksgiving, applied himself to the captain of the guard, desiring him not to execute the king's decree, but to introduce him to him, and he would

discover and interpret his dream.

Arioch the captain, glad to be excused from this bloody work, readily introduced Daniel to the king, who asked him whether he had found out the dream? Daniel answered, that the secret was beyond the reach of human wisdom, and that none but the God of heaven could reveal it, who had been so gracious, for the sake of those who might receive the benefit of the interpretation of it, to discover it to him. Then he thus began to declare the dream:

"Thou sawest, O king, an image of vast dimensions, "admirable in brightness, but terrible in form. The head " of this image was of fine gold, the breast and arms of " silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and "the feet partly iron, and partly clay. Thou sawest, O "king, a stone cut out of the mountain, but from whence "it came, you knew not; which stone, falling upon the " feet of this image, brake them into pieces, and then the " rest of the image fell into dust, which the wind dispers-"ed, so that it was no more to be seen; and the stone "that did this execution on the image, increased to a great "mountain, and filled the earth. This, O king, was the "dream; and this is the interpretation of it."

"Thou art a king of kings, to whom the God of "heaven hath given power, strength and glory: thou "therefore art meant by this head of gold; and after "thee another kingdom shall arise, as inferior to thine as " silver is to gold: and after that a third kingdom, signifi-66 ed by brass, which shall govern the earth. But the fourth " kingdom shall be strong as iron, and destroy the other "kingdoms; and whereas the feet were partly iron, and " partly clay, this kingdom shall be divided, and shall be " partly strong, like iron, and partly weak as clay, and " shall not unite firmly together. But in the days of these

"kings, the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and that kingdom shall not be left to other people; but it shall disperse and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall abide for ever. And whereas you saw that the stone which broke the image in pieces was cut out of the mountain without hands, the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; for the dream

" is true, and the interpretation of it is certain."

Nebuchadnezzar being satisfied by the discovery of his dream, that the interpretation must be true, prostrated himself on the ground, and worshipped Daniel, commanding an oblation and sweet odours to be offered to him; but these extravagant honours Daniel piously refused,\* and instructed the king to direct his devotions to Jehovah alone. For this great satisfaction which Daniel gave the king, in revealing and interpreting his dream, the king made him governor of the whole province of Babylon, and chief of all the learned men; and besides many great and rich presents which he gave him, he promoted his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, who, by deputation from Daniel, were to oversee the affairs of Babylon.

Some time after this, the king, elated with his success against the Jews, Egyptians, and others, and elevated with the interpretation of his dream, which compared him to the golden head of the image, ordered a statue of gold to be made, thirty yards high, and of a proportionable bulk. This stupendous figure he caused to be set up in the plains of Dura, and summoned his subjects of all degrees and conditions to appear at the dedication of it; at which time proclamation was made, that when the signal was given, they should all prostrate themselves

<sup>\*</sup> Refused. Though this be not so expressed, yet we may conclude that Daniel would not admit of such profaneness, from the king's answering Daniel, ch. ii. v. 47, "I know of a truth, that thy God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret."

and worship it, upon pain of being thrown into a burning furnace. This order was obeyed by all, except the captive Jews: which some of the Chaldeans observing, they complained of them to the king; and not caring to meddle with Daniel, who at that time was the chief favourite, they impeached Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, his three friends. These being brought before the king, peremptorily refused to pay adoration to his image, assuring him they trusted in a God, who was able to deliver them from his rage.

This presumptuous answer (as the king took it) so incensed him, that he commanded them to make the furnace seven times hotter than it was before, and to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and cast them into it. This cruel order was immediately executed; and though the heat was so intense that it burned those who threw them in, yet they themselves suffered no injury; but the bonds with which they were tied were loosed, and

they walked freely in the midst of the fire.

The king, at a secure distance, saw this execution; and the fierceness of the fire abating, he in great surprise and amazement cried out; "Did we not cast three men into "the furnace? Behold, I see four men walking at large, "without any hurt, in the midst of the fire, and the form "of the fourth is like the Son\* of God." Then, approaching the furnace, he called to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and said, "Ye servants of the most high "God, come hither." Upon which they came out of the furnace, in the presence of the king and all his attendants, who saw them unhurt, without so much as a hair

<sup>\*</sup> Son of God. That is, Angel of God; for so he is called, Dan. iii. 28. And in other parts of Scripture, angels are called the sons of God, as Job i. 6. and \*\*xxxviii. 7.

Some conceive that Nebuchadnezzar had heard from his pious and learned captives something of the expected Messiah—the Son of God; and had borrowed some notion of his appearance from the Cherubic Figures, taken from the holy of holies, which were now in his possession, and from other emblems of the temple, of which the Man formed a part.

of their heads being singed, or the least smell of the fire about them.

The haughty king was now convinced, that there was a more powerful being than himself, who could protect his servants from the rage of the most insolent and arbitrary tyrant; and therefore, in a sudden transport of devotion, he cried out, "Blessed be the Lord God of "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his "angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him. "Therefore I decree, that those who shall dare to blas-"pheme the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, "shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a "dunghill; because there is no other god that can de-"liver after this manner." Upon this, Daniel's three friends were again preferred, to the great mortification of

those who envied their former promotion.

And now, king Nebuchadnezzar being freed from all the toils of war at home and abroad, indulged himself in the pleasures of his court, and quietly, for a time, enjoyed the fruits of his conquests; till, at length, another dream occasioned fresh disquiet; which dream being perfectly remembered, and concluding that his own people might be able to interpret it, he sent not for Daniel, but for the Chaldeans; to whom he related his dream, but they were as much at a loss, as when the king demanded of them the discovery of his former dream, which he had forgotten. But the revealing of these divine secrets was reserved for the servants of God; and the king meeting with no satisfaction from his own subjects, sent for Daniel, to whom he recounted his dream, which was thus: "I saw a tree of a prodigious magnitude, which seemed "to reach from earth to heaven. It was fair and full of "fruit, yielded shelter to the beasts and fowls, and sus-"tenance to all flesh. I saw also an angel come down "from heaven, who said aloud, Hew down the tree, cut " off the branches, shake off the leaves, and scatter the " fruit, and let all creatures depart from it: yet let the "stump remain in the earth, with a band of iron and "brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be "wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be

"with the beasts in the grass of the earth. Let his heart be changed from that of a man, and a beast's heart be given him, and let seven \* times pass over him. This is the decree of the Holy One, that the living may know, that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whom he pleases, and setteth over it the basest of men."

Daniel, having heard the dream, was so affected with the dreadful judgments that it portended to the king, that he stood silent for the space of an hour; which the king observing, and guessing the true cause of his perturbation, commanded him freely to disclose the interpretation whatever it might portend. Then Daniel, addressing himself with much tenderness and concern to the king, wished that this inauspicious dream, and the interpretation might affect the king's enemies, and thus interpreted it to him.

"The tree, O king, which thou didst see in thy dream, is thyself; for thy greatness reaches to heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. And as to what the angel said of hewing down the tree, this is the meaning of it: It is a decree of the Most High which is determined against the king; For thou shalt be driven from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; thou shalt eat grass with the oxen, and shalt be wet with the dew of heaven; and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou knowest that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

<sup>\*</sup> Seven. By seven times, some think are meant a long time, which in Holy Scripture is signified by the number seven, because it denotes perfection; as if it had been said, until a perfect or full time, that the king thus brutified should repent. The number seven is sometimes applied to weeks; but oftener to years, especially in the prophecy of Daniel. It was the way of speaking among the Chaldeans, and a year was the most common measure of time, especially in the Chronicles of the Kings. See Dan. vii. 25, and xi. 13, but some are of opinion, that these seven years, at the prayer of Daniel, were changed into seven months.

"And whereas it was ordered that the stump of the tree should be left, it shews that the kingdom shall be sure to thee, after thou shalt have known that the Lord of heaven doth rule. And now thou hast heard the interpretation of thy dream, permit me humbly to offer my advice; and may my counsel be acceptable unto thee. Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tran-

" quillity."

Nebuchadnezzar, who had witnessed the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecies, and been an eye witness of God's wonderful power and providence, might have been somewhat depressed in mind at the report of such a judgment pronounced personally against himself: but instead of humbling himself, and deprecating the divine sentence by repentance, as Daniel advised him, "his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride." About a year expired from the time of his remarkable dream, and Daniel's faithful admonition, when he gave full proof of his impenitence; for, surveying the strength and opulence of his capital, and the vast extent of his dominions, he uttered that arrogant, atheistical speech—"Is not this great Babylon, "which I have built\* for the metropolis of my king-

<sup>\*</sup> Built. Nimrod is said, Gen. x. 10, to be the first founder of Babylon, and undoubtedly he was so. But Nebuchadnezzar here calls himself the builder of this city, as those who alter or add to any great structures, would seem to be reputed the first founders, and, by assuming to themselves the praise due to others, extinguish the memory of their predecessors. At first, indeed, Babylon was but a little city, and that often laid waste by the inundations of the river Euphrates, and because Semiramis afterwards very much enlarged and fortified it, and beautified it with many ornaments and fine buildings, she is likewise said to have built it, and celebrated as the foundress of it. But after Semiramis's time, the Assyrian kings, neglecting Babylon, built Nineveh, making it the royal residence, and metropolis of the Assyrian monarchy; and Babylon thus deserted, partly by the inundations of Euphrates, and partly by the incursions of enemies, became ignoble and obscure. At last, Nebuchadnezzar having destroyed Nineveh, made

"dom?" The words had scarcely passed his lips, when a voice from heaven was heard to say, "Unto thee, O "king Nebuchadnezzar, it is declared; thy kingdom is departed from thee, and they shall drive thee from the "conversation of men, and thy dwelling shall be among the beasts of the field." And immediately he was driven\* from the company of men, and he did eat grass as the oxen, and lived like a brute.

By this terrible example God made it appear, how severely he can punish the pride and elevation of men's hearts, by debasing those persons into the condition of beasts, who by their arrogance exalt themselves above the

state of men.

Babylon the seat of the empire, and very much enlarged and beautified it; for he added several walls to it, with magnificent gates. In that part where the royal palace stood, he built another city, which he inclosed with a wall of vast readth and height, where he had those famous pensile gardens, so celebrated of old. Though authors differ very much, as to the height and thickness of the walls of this city, yet it is certain they were prodigious in both, Orosius, and all, owning them to be fifty cubits, which, at the common estimation, is seventy-five feet; so that what Strabo and Curtius relate, viz. that chariots could pass by one another on the top of the walls, may reasonably be credited. As to the punishment which immediately befel Nebuchadnezzar upon this vain self-exaltation, he may by this act be said to have hastened it upon himself, though it was a year before foretold by Daniel; for by emphatically calling himself the author of these mighty things, he defrauded God of the honour, by whose permission he became so mighty, and capable of performing them.

\* Driven. Some think, that this being driven away, was his own shunning human conversation during the disturbance of his mind, which made him betake himself to the fields and woods: others, that the people grown weary of his tyranny, conspired against him, and forced him to fly; which last seems to derive from a tradition of the Hebrews, who say, that his son, Evil-merodach, affecting the throne in his father's life-time, helped to depose him; which is not propable, because after Nebuchadnezzar's state of brutality expired, and he came to himself, his subjects desired his return; but it may be supposed, that in his absence his son might act as regent. The reason of the variety of conjectures in this point proceeds from the distracted history of the Chaldeaus, who in general speak of the reigns of their kings, but seldom mention minute circumstances; for no profane writers take notice of this part of Nebuchadnezzar's life.

What an affecting lesson to the world, and especially to the great, did this degradation of the mighty monarch afford! It was, probably, a sudden attack of insanity, by which he was thus depressed—an affliction, of all others to which humanity is liable, the most distressing. And who is so wise, or so great, as to be secure from this dreadful malady? How little, in this case, does proud man, with all his boasted talents, appear! In a single moment, his stores of learning, however ample, are all destroyed; his ideas, however just and accurate, are erased, like writing on the sandy shore; his possessions, however vast and extensive, rendered totally useless; and, he, who affected to rule, as the lord of the creation, is lowered, in the scale of being, to a level with the grazing brute. O that men were wise, and considered their dependence on Him, "in whose hand is our breath, "and all our ways!"

After Nebuchadnezzar had continued his appointed time in this sad and forlorn condition, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and God was pleased not only to restore him to his understanding and form, but to his former state and dignity; for which he made this thankful acknowledgment; "I\* Nebuchadnezzar do praise, "extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment; and those that walk

" in pride he is able to subdue."

The sacred historian has not informed us concerning the character and conduct of this monarch at the close of life. We presume not to determine whether the influence produced on his mind was permanent or not. He had before professed his conviction, that the God of Daniel was the only true God, and yet afterwards relapsed into pride and idolatry, by which, no doubt,

<sup>\*</sup> I, &c. See Dan. iv. 34. Of the time and manner of this king's death we have no account in the Scriptures. He is supposed not to have lived long after his restoration, but to have left his kingdom to his son Evil-merodach, who is thought to have supplied his place in the government during his father's state of insanity.

his sin was exceedingly aggravated; but charity leads us to hope, that after this peculiar visitation, and his recovery, he lived and died a true penitent, and a sin-

cere worshipper of the Lord Jehovah.

After the death of Nebuchadnezzar, his son Evilmerodach succeeded him, who took compassion on Jehoiakim, the captive king of Judah, and released him from his imprisonment in the thirty-seventh year of his captivity, treating him with great humanity and respect, allowing him an honourable maintenance, and giving him the precedence of all other princes in Ba-

bylon.

Evil-merodach's reign was but short, continuing but two years, at the end of which, his luxurious son Belshazzar succeeded him. In whose first year Daniel had his vision \* of the four beasts representing the four great monarchies: and in the third year of this same king, Daniel had that memorable vision † of the ram and the he-goat, with the interpretation of them. After ‡ which this luxurious king making a great feast for his courtiers, he commanded his servants to bring forth the sacred vessels of gold and silver, which his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple at Jerusalem, that he and his princes, with his wives and concubines, might drink wine in them: which accordingly was done, § and in their cups they sang hymns of praise to their idols.

Belshazzar, thus adding impiety to his excess, so provoked the great God of heaven by this sacrilegious

<sup>\*</sup> Dream. See Dan. vii. † Vision. See Dan. viii.

<sup>‡</sup> After. Though these visions are placed after the luxurious and profane banquet of Belshazzar, yet in order of time they should come before; for Daniel tells the time of each; as, the dream was in the first year, and the vision in the third year of Belshazzar.

<sup>§</sup> Done. The city of Babylon, was at this time besieged by Cyrus and the Medo-Persian army, and the final overthrow of the Babylonian empire drew near, as had been long decreed and foretold in the councils of Providence. See Isaiah, ch. xiii. and xiv. Dan. ch. vii.

contempt of his holy worship, and the profanation of the vessels dedicated to his service, that he terrified this prince in the midst of his luxurious feast, with the appearance of a hand, which, in three words,\* wrote the sentence of his condemnation. Belshazzar was so much astonished and terrified at this dreadful prodigy, which a guilty conscience suggested must needs have a fatal design, that he called for the most learned of his people to shew him the meaning of it; but, notwithstanding the promised reward of purple vests and chains of gold, to those who could discover this mighty secret, they were so far from interpreting it, that they could not so much as read it. This occasioned the utmost consternation in the whole court, which, the queent dowager hearing, came immediately into the banqueting-house, and informed the king, that he had a man in his dominions, named Daniel, in whom was the spirit of the holy gods, and whom his grandfather, ‡ for his extraordinary ability in that respect, had made master of the Magi, who would show the king the interpretation of the words that so much troubled him. The king, rejoicing in the prospect of discovering this terrible secret, sent for Daniel; who appearing before him, and slighting the honours and presents the king had promised in case he could interpret the words, addressed him to the following effect: That since he had not humbled himself, nor taken example by his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar, who for his pride was chased from the conversation of men, and reduced to

<sup>‡</sup> Grandfather. Nebuchadnezzar is here, Dan. v. 11, called Belshazzar's father, not through mistake, but after the manner of the Chaldeans and Hebrews, who commonly call grandchildren and great grand children sons, and grandfathers and great grandfathers fathers. Thus Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are called fathers, after many generations of descents.



<sup>\*</sup> Three words. מגא תקל ופרסן.

<sup>†</sup> Queen. This, in all probability, was Nitocris, the queen dowager, the relict of the great Nebuchadnezzar.

the state of beasts; but had lifted up himself against the Lord of heaven, and profaned the holy vessels dedicated to his service, God being provoked by these his crimes, had sent a hand to write upon the wall his condemnation in these three words, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN; which Daniel interpreted thus: by MENE, God hath numbered\* thy kingdom; by TEKEL, thou art weighed in the balance of his justice and art found too light; by UPHARSIN, thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. The king having heard this dreadful sentence pronounced by Daniel,† how unwelcome soever the interpretation was to himself, yet bestowed upon the prophet the honours promised him, causing him to be clothed in purple, with a chain of gold about his neck, and to be proclaimed the third person in the kingdom.

As to the fulfilment of this prophecy, God immediately verified it, as Daniel had predicted; for the same night Belshazzar king of the Chaldeans‡ was slain God making him a terrible example to all who should slight his warnings, harden their hearts in sin, and profane his holy name.

The impious Belshazzar being thus overtaken by di-

<sup>\*</sup> Numbered. That is, the term of thy kingdom.

<sup>†</sup> Daniel. This prophet, who had been so great and powerful in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, is supposed to have retired from court during the reigns of Evilmerodach his son, and Belshazzarhis grandson, and in those five years (at least) seems to have been forgotten by all but the old queen, widow of Nebuchadnezzar; during which time of his solitude God vouchsafed by wonderful visions to discover to him the successions of all the empires of the world until the blessed kingdom of Christ.

<sup>†</sup> Chaldeans. See Dan. v. 30.

<sup>§</sup> Slain. By the Medes (under the conduct of Darius, king of the Medes, and with help of his son-in-law, the great Cyrus) who at that time besieged Babylon. These taking the advantage whilst the Chaldeans were thus revelling and overcharged with wine, to divide the river Euphrates, possessed themselves of the city, and surprised the court.

vine justice, Darius, the Mede, assumes the throne; \* who, esteeming Daniel as a person filled with the Spirit of God, bestowed on him peculiar marks of his favour; for at first he made him one of the three presidents of the kingdom, and intended to make him viceroy. These honours, so properly conferred on Daniel, soon excited the envy and jealousy of the other presidents and princes, who, thinking it too much for a captive Jew to be preferred above them, conspired to ruin him. They could find no fault with his public administration, for he was perfectly just and faithful in all things that concerned the king. Wherefore concluding they should never find any thing to accuse him of, except in the matter of his religion, they resolved to lay a snare for him in that respect. And in this they were, at first, at a loss how to bring their malice to bear against him, for they well knew the king was apprised of his piety and zeal in the religion of his country, and that he stood so fair in the royal favour, that they dared not directly attack him; and therefore they struck at him in a more distant way; for they persuaded the king to publish a proclamation, that whosoever should ask any petition, either of God or man, except of the king only, for the space of thirty days, should be thrown to the lions. The unwary king, not suspecting any fraud, concluded that, bacause they assured him, that all the presidents, of whom Daniel was the first, had agreed to it, Daniel had consented to it, taking it for a testimony of their affection and loyalty to him at his accession to the throne, without any hesitation consented to it, and it was passed into a decree.

Though Daniel knew that this wicked law was levelled

<sup>\*</sup> Throne. This revolution had been particularly foretold by the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel. The very name of the genera'—Cyrus, was previously declared, two hundred years before; the method whereby it should be accomplished, &c. &c. See Isa. xiii. 6—22, xxi. 2—10, xli. 1, &c. Jer. 1. 1, &c.

Read Prideaux Connexions, part 1, book 2, and bishop Lowth on Isa. xiii. 21, and 45.

at him, yet preferring the law of God to that of men, he continued his usual course of praying to, and praising God three times a day, kneeling upon his knees, with his chamber window open towards Jerusalem. His enemies, who had laid this snare for him, soon found an opportunity to betray him; for having taken him in the act of praying, they presented themselves before Darius, and accused Daniel of contempt and rebellion in disobeying the king's decree, desiring immediate execution of the sentence against him. The king, too late, perceived their design, and being vexed at his easy credulity, in suffering himself to be thus imposed upon, laboured to have the decree reversed; but the grandees represented to him, that the royal decrees, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, were unalterable, and that therefore the penalty Daniel had incurred, being irreversible, he must be cast into the lions' den. The king's weakness in this unjust act, gave way to the solicitations of these wicked men; and though Daniel's piety and wisdom had recommended him very powerfully to his favour, yet he thought, in honour, he could not recede from his word, and therefore delivered Daniel to them, at the same time unwittingly predicting, that the God whom he served continually, would preserve him.

-Daniel being thrown into the den, to prevent any means that might be attempted for his escape, a great stone was laid on the mouth of it, and sealed not only with the royal signet, but with that of the lords too. The king retired to his palace very pensive, where he spent the night in great anxiety and uneasiness of mind for his favourite Daniel; and early in the morning repairing to the den, between hope and despair, he in a melancholy tone called to Daniel; "O Daniel, servant " of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest con-"tinually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Yes, O "king! replied Daniel: my God hath sent his angel, who " hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me, " because he found me innocent in his sight, and just to "thee." The king, overjoyed to find the person he so highly valued thus miraculously preserved, ordered him

immediately to be taken out of the den, and at the same time commanded that all those who had accused Daniel, with their wives and children, should be cast into the same den, which was immediately done, and the lions seized and tore them in pieces, before ever they came to the bottom of the Den. The providence of God appearing so visibly in the preservation of Daniel, the king published a proclamation, "That in all parts of his do-"minions, men should fear and tremble before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, and abideth for ever. "His kingdom shall not perish, and his dominion shall always endure. He delivereth and rescueth, and work-"eth signs and wonders in heaven and earth, who hath

" delivered Daniel from the power of the lions."

Daniel lived not only all Darius's reign, which was seventeen years, but also in the reign of Cyrus, the first Persian monarch. In whose third year, he had that extraordinary vision, relating more especially to the latter times of the Jewish state, mentioned in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth chapters. Which is the last account the sacred text gives of him; which is also silent as to his death, though he is said by others to have died a natural death in the land of the Chaldeans, and to be honourably buried there; being laid by himself in the royal sepulchre. But however this might be, it is certain, he lived to enjoy the high satisfaction of seeing liberty granted for the return of his captive brethren, and for rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem.

There are two stories in the Apocrypha, which some add to the book of Daniel, making that of Susanna's being accused by the two elders, who were convicted by Daniel, to be the thirteenth chapter of Daniel's prophecy; and, according to the Latin, the fourteenth chapter is the discovery which Daniel made to the king of Babylon, of the idol's not eating the meat that was set before him in his temple, as the priests of that false god persuaded that prince; as also the destruction of the dragon, which the Babylonians adored, and which Daniel caused to burst. As to the time of these two stories, the first is said to happen in the reign of Astvages, who being called the last king

of the Medes, must be that Darius the Mede, who slew Belshazzar, and took Babylon, and whom Cyrus immediately succeeded. As to Darius the Mede's being called Astyages, it is as reasonable to suppose him to be the king in whose reign the history of Susanna is related, as to allow that he was called by other names; for he is by the Babylonians called Nabonides, by Herodotus, Labynet, and by the Greeks, Darius Mediss. As to the history of Daniel's discovering the cheat of Bell's priests, and bursting the dragon, by the latter part of it, which inentions his being cast into the lions' den against the king's inclination, it seems to be the same story with what we have related in the text of Daniel's being cast into the lions' den, and his deliverance from thence; with some addition of circumstances in the beginning, and want of others in the end; and it being said in this history in the Apocrypha, that it happened in Cyrus's reign, there must be a mistake in the transcriber, and Cyrus is put for Darius; for in Dan. vi. the text says positively, that action of Daniel's was in the reign of Darius, who had promoted Daniel.

In the first year of the reign of Cyrus\* the Persian, it pleased the Lord so to touch the heart of that prince (according to what had been foretold by the prophet Jeremiah)† that he published an edict, giving leave to all the Jews to return to their own country, to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, to worship their God, to take

<sup>\*</sup> Cyrus. This was that Cyrus, of whom the prophet Isaiah, about two hundred years before the birth of that prince, thus speaketh: (Isaiah xliv. 28.) "He saith to Cyrus, Thou art my shepherd, and he shall perform all my desire, saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built, and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be surely laid." This Cyrus being already king of the Medes and Persians, resolving to unite the Babylonian monarchy to his own, marched towards that city with his army; took Shushan, or Susa, and routed Nabonides in battle. After this defeat of Nabonides, or Darius the Mede, Cyrus besieged and took Babylon, by which he became master of all the east; which till then had been divided into several monarchies.

<sup>†</sup> Jeremiab. See ch. xxix. v. 10.

with them their gold, their silver and their goods, and beasts for sacrifice. The Jews, who had long wished for that happy day, prepared to set forward; and Zorobabel, a prince of Judah, whom Cyrus had appointed to be their governor, led them to their own country, consisting of near fifty thousand souls. They took along with them all the vessels and utensils of the temple, which had been carried to Babylon in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, which were restored to them by express order from

Cyrus.

When Zorobabel, and those under his conduct, were come into Judea, they met at Jerusalem, to undertake the re-building of the temple. The foundations of which they laid, offered sacrifices, and made solemn prayers to God; and kept the several feasts appointed by the law. It was in the second month of the second year of their return from the captivity, that they laid the foundation of the temple, which was begun with all the solemnity and magnificence that the circumstances of time and place would admit: but some of the ancients, who had seen the first temple, before Nebuchadnezzar caused it to be demolished, burst into tears, when they saw, by the foundation of this, how much inferior\* it was likely to prove.

Whilst they were proceeding with the temple, the Samaritans, who were planted in several cities of Israel in the room of those Israelites that Salmanasser, king of Assyria had long before carried away captives, hearing that the people of Judah had begun to build the temple, came to the governor Zorobabel, and desired to join with them in the work, alledging, that they served the same

<sup>\*</sup> Inferior. The Jews say that the second temple wanted five things, which were the chief glory of the first, viz. the Ark and its Furniture; the Shecinah, or cloud of the Divine Presence; the Holy Fire; the Urim and Thummim, and the Spirit of Prophecy. But these were probably not the reasons of that mourning which was made by the ancient Jews when the foundation was laid, but their consciousness that a few poor tributaries would never be able to erect an edifice at all equal to that which was built by the munificence of David and Solomon.

God as the people of Judah did. But the Governor and the chiefs of the families of Israel would by no means allow them to have any share in this work, fearing that they, who were idolaters, notwithstanding they pretended to worship the God of Israel, might profane the temple with idolatry. This refusal so exasperated the Samaritans, that, from that moment, they made it their business to obstruct the earrying on the work. Notwithstanding which, the Jews proceeded, till the Samaritans having, by bribes, corrupted some persons about the king, put a stop\* to it, which continued till the reign of Darius.†

Cyrus, the Persian, having taken the city of Shushan, in the territory of Babylon, it was, by his successors, made the residence of the Persian monarchs. Here it was that Ahasuerus solaced and regaled himself after his Egyptian expedition, inviting all the princes and governors of his provinces to an entertainment of an hundred and fourscore days; after which he invited the inferior people with the rest, to another feast which continued seven days. Nor was this feasting only among the men, but also among the women; for Vashti the queen had provided a banquet for the ladies in the palace. On the last day of this feast, the king in a frolic, determined to

<sup>\*</sup> Stop. This stop to the building of the temple may be supposed to have been in Cyrus's time, Esdr. iv. 5.

<sup>†</sup> Darius. This must be Darius Hystaspis; and the Darius, in whose second year the building was carried on, was Darius Nothus, in whose time the prophets Haggai and Zechariah prophesied, and not before; see Esdr. v. 1. Indeed if it were not for cotemporary occurrences, the variety of names given to several kings, would so confound the chronology, that it would be impossible to reduce it to any certainty. For Cambyses the son of Cyrus is called Ahasuerus. To him the Samaritans sent letters to stop the building of the temple. They likewise sent to Magus on the same account. This prince had possessed himself of the Persian empire after the death of Ahasuerus; and would not permit the Jews to rebuild their city or temple. He is likewise by historians called by several names, being in Ledr. iv. 7, called Artaxerxes.

present his queen, who was very beautiful, in a public manner, to his numerous guests, and sending his seven chamberlains to attend her, he ordered that she should ap-

pear with the crown on her head.

The haughty queen disdaining to be made a public spectacle, refused to obey the king's command, which so incensed him, that, consulting how to punish her for this public affront, it was agreed, that lest this act of the queen should be brought into a precedent, she should be deposed for her contumacy, and that a collection of the fairest women should be made for the king to take his choice of them.

This last proposal accorded with the inclinations of the luxurious monarch; and among the crowd of beauties who were brought to court, none pleased the eye of this amorous prince like the fair Esther.\* She was of the Jewish race, niece to Mordecai, of the tribe of Benjamin. This virgin having lost her parents, lived at Shushan with her uncle, at the time when queen Vashti was deposed. Esther's native beauty, and sweet disposition, so engaged the fond king, that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti, whom he had deposed. At the celebration of his nuptials he made a feast to all his court, which, in honour to his new queen, he called Esther's feast, and for her sake not only made presents to his guests, but remitted the tribute of all his provinces.

<sup>\*</sup> Esther. As to the author of the book of Esther, it is uncertain who he was. Some have thought it was written by Mordecai, because the book takes notice, that Mordecai wrote letters to all the Jews on the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month Adar; but it is not said, that he wrote all the history. It is more likely, that the great synagogue caused it to be composed, to preserve the memory of that signal event, and give an account of the original of the feast of lots, Esth. iii. 7, and afterwards added it to the number of the sacred books: it was first written in Hebrew, as we have it in the nine first chapters of St. Jerom's version. Some Grecian Jew afterwards made additions, which have been inserted, in their proper places, in the Greek version, and placed all together by St. Jerom, at the end of the book, from the twenty-fourth verse of the tenth chapter.

Mordecai, at Esther's first going to court, had cautioned her not to discover that she was a Jewess, which she carefully observed; and it might be her uncle's care lest she should be refused by the king on account of her being a captive; for the same reason, probably, he took care to conceal his relation to Esther, lest it might be disadvantageous to her. These circumstances induced him to remain a contented servant at court, till some favourable opportunity should be offered for his promotion; and this soon occurred. It happened whilst Mordecai attended at the palace gate, he obtained the knowledge of a conspiracy formed by two of the chamberlains to seize and murder the king. This he immediately communicated to his niece, the queen, who acquainted the king with it in Mordecai's name. Upon which, the two chamberlains were seized, convicted, and hanged, and the whole affair recorded in the Persian annals: but Mordecai was not immediately noticed.

About this time, king Ahasuerus had been very lavish of his favour to a proud Amalekite, named Haman, whose merits are not mentioned, and, it is probable, they might be as obscure as those of favourites generally are, However it was, Haman is advanced in honour above all'the princes of the court; and all the attendants about the king paid him reverence, except Mordecai. This was not, at first, observed by Haman; but some of the attendants, who were desirous of obliging the court-favourite, informed Haman, that Mordecai the Jew refused to pay him reverence. This inflamed the haughty Haman, who immediately meditated revenge; but such a bloody one, as nothing between man and man could deserve; for no less than a whole nation\* must bleed to atone for the petty slight put upon this aspiring wretch.

<sup>\*</sup> Nation. The fifty thousand that went with Zorobabel to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, were not all that were left of the Jewish nation, for we may rather suppose, that they multiplied at Babylon instead of diminishing. Ezra the scribe, and several others returned after the temple was finished and dedicated. See Ezra vii. 1.

was a great as well as a wicked undertaking; and Haman, to go surely to work in it, called his people about him, and made them east the lot before him from day to day, from the first month to the twelfth, that they might know, what month and day would be most propitious to their design. So that Haman, to his mortification, was reluctantly obliged to bear with Mordecai's contempt every

day for a whole year.

At length, however, Haman having fixed a time, addressed the king, and obtained a decree to put all the Jews to death throughout the king's dominions. this bloody execution, letters were dispatched to all the governors of provinces and cities, scaled with the king's seal; which, of course, filled the poor Jews with the utmost perplexity and terror, but especially those who resided in the royal city of Shushan, from whence this decree was issued. None in that place was more sensible of the dismal consequences of this cruel decree than Mordecai; who rending his clothes, and putting on sackcloth and ashes, went through the city, bemoaning the hard fate that threatened him and his countrymen. was soon taken notice of, and reported to the queen; who not knowing the occasion, sent clothes to her uncle, which he refused, returning information by the messenger of the true cause of his mourning, and the danger which she and all her nation were in; and that unless she immediately repaired to the king, and interceded for them, they would all be cut off.

Esther, however inclined to the undertaking, met with a difficulty that seemed insurmountable, for there was a law, forbidding any person to come into the king's presence, without special order, upon pain of death. Mordecai returned answer, that she ought rather to run the hazard of her own life, than suffer all her nation to perish. This roused the queen, who immediately requested that he would cause the Jews in Shushan to fast three days, as she herself would do; and after that, she would address the king, though it was against the law,

let what would happen.

At the end of this fast she dressed herself in her royal

robes, and going to the king's apartment, made a stop just as she came in sight of the king, who immediately held out his sceptre to her, and asked her what she requested of him. This encouraged her to approach nearer, and when she touched the end of the sceptre, he kindly assured her, that he would grant her request, though it cost half his kingdom. Upon which, she declared, that her particular wish was, that the king, accompanied by Haman, would do her the honour of partaking of a banquet which she had provided. This request was so much the more acceptable to the king, because she had invited his favourite Haman; who, though he was a constant companion of the royal festivities, was not, at this time, present with his luxurious master; wherefore the king gave order, that Haman should have speedy notice, that he might attend the queen's invitation.

All things being prepared, and the guests seated, the king was so well pleased with his entertainment, that he again repeated his former promise of granting the queen whatsoever she should ask, even to the half of the kingdom. The queen, not thinking this a proper time to open the secret to the king, intreated his Majesty and Haman to favour her with their company once more, on the following day, when she promised to present her request. The king readily consented, and so the company

for that time broke up.

Haman, not a little pleased that he should be thus distinguished, not only by the king, but by the queen too, formed extravagant notions of future happiness to himself, and went out of the presence so elevated, that he expected nothing less than the respect due to him, as the second person in the kingdom. As he passed along, every spectator paid him the most profound respect, except Mordecai, who took no notice of this gaudy courtier; which stung the haughty favourite to the heart. However, he concealed his resentment, and when he was come home, he began to pride himself in his prosperous condition, and recounting to his family the honours the king had heaped upon him, he told them how the queen had distinguished him above all the court, inviting him

only to accompany the king to a banquet, and that tomorrow he was to attend her again upon a second invitation. "Yet," said he, "what pleasure is all this, so long
"as I see the hated Mordecai, who shews me no respect."
His friends concurred with him in his resentment, and to
make short work with Mordecai, advised Haman to order
a gibbet fifty cubits high to be prepared, and to petition
the king, that Mordecai might the next day be hanged on
it. Haman, who vainly imagined the king would not
deny him such a trifle as the life of a wretched Jew, ap-

proved the project, and the gibbet was erected.

But God was pleased to dispose matters otherwise than this proud son of Agag had wished: for it happened that, the night before this entertainment was to have been given, a sudden inquietude seized the king, so that he could not sleep; wherefore, to divert himself, he called for the annals of his reign, and ordered an attendant to read them to him; who, coming to that passage which mentioned Mordecai's discovery of the treason of the two chamberlains, who had conspired against the king, he asked, what reward had been bestowed on Mordecai for that service? They told him, none. Whereupon the king asked, Who waited without? They told him, Haman; whom he ordered to be called in.

Haman, whose resentment had kept him as wakeful as the inquietude of the king, was come early to court, to petition that Mordecai might be hanged on the gibbet he had provided; and being called into the presence by the king's command, he doubted not in the least of having his petition answered. But, full of hope as he was, the king prevented him, by asking him, what honour should be bestowed on the man whom the king delighted to distinguish? Haman, vainly concluding himself the happy man, resolved not to be wanting in proposing lavish homours, and gave his advice thus: "Let the man, whom the "king designs to honour, be clothed in the royal gar-"ments, be mounted on the same horse which the king "himself is used to ride; let the royal diadem be set on his head, and the chief man in the kingdom lead the

"horse, walking before him, and proclaiming, Thus " shall it be done to the man, whom the king delights to " honour."

Haman had no sooner delivered his advice, than the king, quite contrary to his hope and expectation, ordered him to get the horse, apparel and diadem ready, and do just as he had said to Mordecai the Jew, charging

him not to fail in the least part of it.

This unexpected stroke, so contrary to his proud and cruel expectations, cut the proud Haman to the heart; but the king's word was law, and he knew there was no disputing it. Therefore he was obliged to obey, and attend Mordecai in the form which he himself had prescribed, proclaiming before him all the way he went. "Thus shall it be done to the man, whom the king delights "to honour."

The ceremony being concluded, Mordecai returned to his post at the palace gate; and Haman, in great discontent, hastened home; where he related to his family the disgrace he had suffered, in being forced to do honour to his enemy. They, considering the condition of the man, told him the fate of declining favourites, and that if Mordecai were a Jew, he would rise upon his ruin.

Whilst they were entertaining Haman with this melancholy presage, messengers came to hasten him to the queen's feast. Where the king being come, he asked her, as before, What her request was? She answered, "It was "mercy for herself and all her nation, which he, by the "advice of a cruel enemy, had delivered up to de-

" struction."

The king, with great concern asked her, who had been guilty of so wicked a contrivance? She answered, It was This sentence immediately alarmed Haman; which the king observing, and looking upon him with great indignation, he rose from the banquet, and went into the garden: Haman also rose, and taking the opportunity of the king's absence, addressed himself to the queen to save his life; but whilst he was in this suppliant posture the king returned, and seeing Haman so near the

queen, jealousy suggesting that he had some base design on her, he cried out in a rage, "Will he force the queen "before my face?"

No sooner had the words passed his lips than Haman's face was covered, which was a sure token of death to him, and Harbonah the eunuch, having notice of Haman's design upon Mordecai, told the king that Haman had prepared a gibbet fifty cubits high to hang Mordecai upon; which the king hearing, commanded them to hang Haman upon it. Execution thus done on Haman, the king gave his estate to the queen, which she resigned to Mordecai; to whom the king, in consideration of his former services, and relation to the queen, gave his ring, as he had before done to Haman.

But notwithstanding Haman was removed, the decree against the Jews remained in force, wherefore the queen desired the king to recall it; which he not only granted, but published another edict, giving leave to the Jews to take revenge on their enemies the same day. Pursuant to that order, the Jews slew their enemies and persecutors in Shushan, in which number fell Haman's ten sons, and throughout all the other cities of Assyria. Ever since the Jews have kept a solemn festival in memory of this signal deliverance on the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month Adar, which was called the feast of lots.\*

<sup>\*</sup> Lots. See Esth. iii. 7. It was called the feast of Purim, from the Persian word Pur, which signifies a lot. It was instituted by Mordecai in remembrance of the delivery of the Jews from Haman. by whom lots were cast day by day, and month by month, for their destruction. It was ordered to be kept two days for this reason: the Jews at Shushan had two days allowed them to revenge themselves of their enemies, but the rest of the Jews, in other places, had but one. This caused at first some difference in their time of feasting. For the Jews, in all other parts of the kingdom, having done execution on their enemies the thirteenth day, kept their festival on the fourteenth. But the Jews at Shushan being engaged both on the thirteenth and fourteenth days in defending themselves, kept the festival for their deliverance on the fifteenth day. But afterwards, when Mordecai had made a record of this great deliverance, he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the dominions of Ahasuerus, to establish it as a standing ordi

In this very remarkable and interesting portion of history, we have a wonderful display of the divine power and goodness, in the protection of his ancient people the Jews, and in baffling the crafty and cruel projects of their enemies. The numerous Jews who resided in the provinces were threatened with immediate destruction. The folly of the king; the obstinacy of the queen; the advancement of Esther; the office of Mordecai; the ambition of Haman; the restlessness of the monarch; were all links in that chain of Providence, by which the Jews were to be preserved from utter ruin. The whole is an encouragement to the church of God, when oppressed and persecuted, to trust in the Lord, who "knows how "to deliver the godly out of temptation," and to effect for his people, in the darkest seasons of danger and distress, exceedingly and abundantly above all that they ask or think. Let us now return to the affairs of Jerusalem.

The building of the city and temple of Jerusalem having been delayed for many years, was at length recommenced in the second year of Darius,\* at the insti-

nance among them, that they should keep both the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month Adar (which was the twelfth month with them; and takes in part of the twelfth, and part of the first month with us) yearly, as the days whereon the Jews rested from their enemies. This Mordecai established, and being next in place and power to the king, he wrote to the Jews about it; and queen Esther wrote also with all authority to confirm his letters. The Jews thereupon, in all places, took it as an obligation upon them and their posterity, that they would, without fail, keep these two days, at the appointed time every year; in every family, province, and city, to be a memorial of their deliverance, to them and their posterity forever. In these two days they read the history of Esther in their synagogues; and as often as they hear the name of Haman mentioned, they beat with their fists and hammers upon the benches and boards, as if they were knocking upon Haman's head.

<sup>\*</sup> Darius. This must be Darius Nothus, and not Darius Longimanus, whom some will have to be Esther's son; for the prophets Haggai and Zechariah are not mentioned till Darius Nothus's reign, in the second year of which,

gation of the two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah. For being discouraged by the Samaritans, and the prohibition from the court, they concluded that this was not the time\* the Lord had decreed for the re-building his house: though at the same time they took care to build convenient housest for themselves. For this the prophet Haggai reproved them, assuring them that their want of success in other affairs was owing to their neglect in not proceeding with the Lord's house. This roused both the governor and people, who being sensible of their negligence, resolve to make amends by their future obedience, resuming their work with great alacrity; and to induce them to perseverance in this good temper, the prophet Haggai was again sent to them, to assure them that the Lord was with them in this undertaking: and that, notwithstanding the former temple far exceeded what this was likely to be, yet if they continued obedient, he would fill this house with greater‡ glory than he had done the former.

the building of both city and temple went forward; and Darius Longimanus reigning thirty-nine or forty years, it is scarcely probable that it began to go forward in in his reign; besides, if Darius Longimanus was the son of Esther, it may give occasion of wonder, that so good a woman, and so zealous a Jew as Mordecai, having such interest as they had with king Ahasuerus, should not have promoted that work.

\* Time. See Hag. i. 2. † Houses. Ibid. ver. 4.

‡ Greater. The prophet here means not any external pomp or worldly splendor; for in those the old temple, built by Solomon, far exceeded the new, at the best. But he means by the greater glory, that blessing of peace, Hag. ii. 10, which the world enjoyed at the birth of the Prince of peace, the Saviour of the world, and the actual presence of the king Messiah in this very house; for it cannot be supposed, that God by his prophet would speak so magnificently of any worldly splendor, when in ver. 7, 8, he said, he would "shake the heavens and earth, the sea and land, and that the desire of all nations should come." And undoubtedly by moving the nations, ver. 8, he meant the calling of the Gentiles, which by Isaiah, and other prophets, was always joined with the coming of the Messiah: and there fore nothing but this could be that greater glory.

Two months after Haggai had prophesied, and earnestly pressed the Jews to be zealous and diligent in building the temple, the Lord raised up another prophet, Zechariah, the son of Barachiah, to encourage them in their undertaking; in which neither governor, high-priest nor people were wanting, but every one in his station forwarded the building so much, that it was nearly finished, when Tatnai, king Darius's governor, and other enemies to the Jews, having notice of what they were doing, came and demanded by what authority they rebuilt the temple and the wall about it, and demanding the names of the undertakers.

Tatnai and his friends, expected by these inquiries, to have alarmed the Jews, and oblige them to desist from their enterprise, but the elders still persisted in the work, encouraged by the prayers and instructions of the pro-These adversaries disappointed of their object, and seeing the Jews would not be frightened from their work, aequainted the king with the whole matter, in a letter\* to this purpose: "That going to the province of "Judea, to the house of the great God, we found the "building in great forwardness. Then asking the elders " of the people, who set them to work, and their names, "that we might certify to thee, O king, they returned " us answer; that they were the servants of the God of " heaven and earth; and were rebuilding the house, that " was many years ago built by a great king of Israel; "but that their fathers having provoked the Lord God " of Israel by their accumulated transgressions, he gave "them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Ba-"bylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this building, and " carried the inhabitants captive to Babylon. But the "great Cyrus made a decree in their favour, empower-" ing them to return and rebuild their city and temple, "restoring to them all the sacred vessels and utensils. "Upon this encouragement they laid the foundation of "this house of God, that is in Jerusalem; which is now

<sup>\*</sup> Letter. See Ezra v. 7.

"almost finished. If the king therefore please, let search be made among the records, that we may know, whether any such decree was made by Cyrus; and let the king direct us what to do in this affair."

Search accordingly was made; and in Ecbatane, the decree of Cyrus for rebuilding the temple and city of Jerusalem was found; which when king Darius had read, he gave a strict charge to Tatnai, and his other officers, not to molest or disturb the Jews in their work; and, to make them sensible of his good inclination to the Jews, he ordered Tatnai, and his other governors, to advance money out of the several tributes in their districts for that use, and to furnish them with materials for the same; and if they wanted beasts for sacrifice, or any provisions of corn, salt, wine, or oil, to distribute to them according to the direction of the priests that were at Jerusalem; and all this was ordered to be done, upon the penalty of having their houses pulled down and made a dunghill, and themselves hanged.

These men readily complied with the king's command, furnishing the Jews with all necessaries, and the work went on so prosperously and speedily, that in the sixth year of Darius it was finished. After\* which, those of the captivity, and those whom they had proselyted from the idolatry of the heathen, celebrated the feast of the dedi-

<sup>\*</sup> After. Before this, viz. in the fourth year of Darius, the Jews in captivity had sent a message to Jerusalem, to know how they were to behave themselves in relation to their former fasts, now that the temple was rebuilding? (The several fasts they had kept were on certain mournful occasions; as particularly that fast in the fifth month, which was for the destruction of the temple; and that in the seventh month for the murder of Gedaliah their governor, Jer. lii. 12, and xli. 1, 2.) To this the Lord returned answer by his prophet Zechariah, ch. vii. v. 5, &c. "That they had not in those fasts observed his will, (rather deploring their calamitous condition, than humbling themselves by repentance) and that it would please him better, to see them execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassion one towards another, and abstain from oppressing the widow, the fatherless, the stranger and the poor, and from imagining evil one against another.

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cation\* of the temple with great joy, offering a hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and twelve goats, according to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel: and having settled the priests and Levites in their order for the service of God, they kept the passover at the usual time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days, for joy that the Lord had inclined the heart of the king to encourage and assist them in the re-building the house of the Lord God of Israel.

The temple being finished, Ezra,† a priest and scribe, learned in the law of God, who had hitherto continued at Babylon, with others of the captivity, who had not yet returned, having obtained leave of the king, prepared to go to Jerusalem. To this the king not only readily consented, but gave him an ample commission‡ to take with him what he should think necessary both for his journey thither, and service there; furnishing him with money to buy cattle for sacrifice, provisions of corn, wine, oil and salt, and giving him credit to take of his treasures in those parts to the value of a hundred § talents of silver: besides which, he gave to the priests, Levites, singers, porters, and Nethinims, || or ministers of the house of God, an indemnity from all toll, tribute or custom; empowering Ezra at the same time to appoint

<sup>\*</sup> Dedication. The feast of Dedication is termed in the new Testament Enkainia, a feast wherein something is renewed: because those things only are reputed consecrated, which are separated from their common, and dedicated to some new and holy use. We read of many things consecrated in the Old Testament; as the tabernacle, the temple, priests, altars, vessels, and garments: but there was no anniversary or yearly solemnity appointed to be observed in remembrance of their consecration.

<sup>†</sup> Ezra. See his genealogy deduced from Aaron, ch. vii.

<sup>‡</sup> Commission. See Ezra vii. 12.

<sup>§</sup> Hundred, &c. That is, thirty-seven thousand, five hundred pounds.

<sup>|</sup> Nethinims. These were under-officers, for the more servile work of the temple; such as the fraudulent Gibeonites were first appointed to.

magistrates and judges over the people, to do justice among them, and instruct those that knew not the law of God.

Ezra having returned thanks to the Lord, who had thus mercifully inclined the king's heart to beautify and adorn the temple, and given him favour in the eyes of the king and his princes, prepared to return to Jerusalem with those who were left at Babylon, being in number one thousand four hundred and ninety-six males. these he took his way by the river that runneth to Ahava, where, encamping three days, he took an account of the people, and finding no Levites or Nethinims among them, he sent back Eliezer and some others to Iddo, who was chief of the Nethinims at Casiphia, requiring him to send with them some officers fit for the service of the Lord's house; upon which they brought several Levites, and two hundred and twenty Nethinims to the camp. now Ezra, considering the great charge of money and plate they had with them, and to what dangers they might be exposed in their march, proclaimed a fast, to implore the divine protection over them and their substance. For though he might, for asking, have had a convoy from the king, yet remembering he had told the king, that the hand\* of their God would be upon them, he declined it. Therefore having fasted and prayed on this occasion, they proceeded; and Ezra having delivered by weight to twelve of the priests, the gold, silver, and vessels, which the king and his counsellors, and others, had given him as an offering to the house of the Lord, he enjoined them to keep this treasure† safe, till they came to

<sup>\*</sup> Hand. See Ezra vii. 28, and ibid.

<sup>†</sup> Treasure. This treasure was of a considerable value: for there were six hundred and fifty talents of silver, which at three hundred seventy-five pounds to the talent, make two hundred forty-three thousand seven hundred and fifty pounds. The silver vessels weighed a hundred talents, which came to thirty-seven thousand and five hundred pounds. The gold in coin was an hundred talents, which, at four thousand five hundred pounds each talent, made four hundred and fifty thousand

Jerusalem, and there to deliver it by weight to the chief of the priests and Levites, as they had received it of him.

As Ezra had apprehended, they were in danger on their march, for they were way-laid;\* but God was with them, and preserved them; and after a journey of four months, they arrived safe at Jerusalem, where having refreshed themselves three days, they delivered the treasure, by weight, in the house of the Lord to those priests who were appointed to receive it, and an inventory of the number and weight was taken. Then they offered a burnt-offering of twelve bullocks for the twelve tribes, ninety-six rams, seventy lambs, and twelve he-goats. After which Ezra delivered the king's commission to the officers, who in obedience to it, furnished the people with all things necessary for the service of the temple.

Soon after this, some of the chief Israelites complained to Ezra, that the priests, Levites, and people, had not separated themselves from the abominations of the ancient natives;† but had taken their daughters for wives to themselves, and sons. This threw Ezra into so violent a fit of grief, that he tore off the hair of his head and beard, and those who feared God among the people assembled together with him, and lamented deeply the transgression of those that had been captives, and were lately drawn into these wicked practices; and Ezra, having continued in a sorrowful posture till the time of evening sacrifice, then fell on his knees, and spreading out his hands to the Lord, made this humble confession; and prayer.

sand pounds. Besides which, there were twenty basons of gold of a thousand drams, and two vessels of fine copper, as valuable as gold.

<sup>\*</sup> Way-laid. See Ezra, viii. 31.

<sup>†</sup> Natives. These were the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites; with whom the Israelites were expressly forbidden all manner of conversation, Deut. vii. 3, &c.

<sup>‡</sup> Confession. See Ezra, ix. 6.

"Our trespass is so great, that I am ashamed to look "up to thee, O Lord, we have been sinners from the be-"ginning; for which thou didst deliver our kings and "priests into the hands of the heathen kings. But thou "hast shewed us favour in our captivity, and inclined "the hearts of the kings of Persia to be merciful to us, " and to restore us to Jerusalem. And now, what shall we "say for our ungrateful disobedience in neglecting thy "commandments? Thou hast forbidden us to defile our-"selves with the abominations of the people of the "land; to marry their daughters, or partake of their "wealth; and yet we have broken thy commandment, "and made affinity with them. Thou mayest justly be "angry with us, till thou hast consumed us: but thou, "O Lord, art righteous, for we remain, as appears this "day. Behold, we are before thee in our sins, by reason " of which we cannot justify ourselves."

Ezra having ended this confession in a shower of tears, the Lord was pleased so to influence the minds of the people, that they likewise wept; which when Shecaniah, a man of condition in Israel, observed, he, in behalf of himself and the people, thus addressed himself to Ezra. "We have sinned in taking strangers to our wives: yet considering the disposition of the people to repent, there is hope in Israel, that God will be merciful. Let us therefore make a covenant with our God, to put away all the strange wives and their children, and do

"thou see that it be done as the law obligeth."

Ezra accordingly caused proclamation to be made throughout all Judah and Jerusalem, that they should meet at Jerusalem within three days, upon penalty of confiscation\* of all their substance, and excommunication. Upon the summons they all met at Jerusalem, and standing in the streets they trembled partly through guilt, and partly through cold, for it was a very wet season. Then Ezra, repeating the occasion of their assembling,

<sup>\*</sup> Confiscation. See Ezra, x. 8.

they promised to do as he would have them; but desired him to consider the great number of those that had transgressed in this thing; the inconveniency of the wet season; and that it was not the work of a single day. Therefore they desired, that their rulers might answer for them; and that all they, who in the several cities had taken strange wives, should come at appointed times, and with them the elders of every city, to certify that these were all that were guilty in that place: and so proceed till the Lord was appeased. This was approved; and certain chief men of Israel were deputed to inspect the matter till it was finished: after which they took a list of all that had taken strange wives, and obliged them to give their hands,\* that they would put them away. Which being done, they offered a trespass-offering, as the law required, and so the matter was concluded.

Zerubabel the governor being now dead, and the administration of civil as well as ecclesiastical affairs passing through Ezra's hands, God was pleased to relieve him, by joining another in commission with him, which was Nehemiah,† a captive Jew, and a favourite of the king of Persia. It happened one day, that Nehemiah saw some men of Judah, who had been at Jerusalem, and were come back again to Chaldea. He asked them of the welfare of their brethren that were in Jerusalem; who told him, that they were in great affliction, and under great reproach from their enemies,‡ to whose insults they

<sup>\*</sup> *Hands*. This was a certain ceremony of giving security, for the confirmation of any covenant; as in Ezek. xvii. 18.

<sup>†</sup> Nehemiah. Some will needs have this Nehemiah to be the same with Ezra; which cannot be; for he was a companion part of the time with Ezra; and his speaking of Ezra in the third person, as he does, ch. vii. ver. 65, and ch. viii. ver. 9, and of himself in the first person, ch. i. ver. 1, shews he was Nehemiah distinct from Ezra.

<sup>‡</sup> Enemies. Probably the Samaritans, or other enemies of the Jews: but chiefly the Samaritans who opposed their rebuilding the temple, after they refused to join with them.

were daily exposed, because the walls\* of the city remained in their ruinous condition, and the gates which had been burnt, when Nebuchadnezzar took it, continued

just as they were.

This melancholy account drew tears from Nehemiah's eyes, and preparing himself by mourning and fasting, he addressed himself to God in prayer, in behalf of his distressed brethren at Jerusalem, acknowledging their faults, deprecating the judgment of God, and begging a favourable audience of the king, to whom he intended that day to apply. Nehemiah's long course of mourning, and pungent sorrow for the sad state of his countrymen, had produced such an alteration in his countenance, that when, in rotation, he was called to wait on the king, as his cupbearer, he observed the change, and demanded the cause of it.

At first, Nehemiah was struck with fear; but considering the king's favour to him, he embraces the opportunity, and discovers the true cause of his grief; observing that his countenance could not be otherwise than sad, whilst the city and place of his fathers' sepulchres lay waste, and the gates of it had been consumed with fire.

The king very mildly asked him, what he requested of him? Nehemiah replied, "That thou wouldest send me "to Jerusalem, the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I "may re-build it." No sooner was this request presented than it was granted; but the king, unwilling to part with him altogether, demanded how long time it would require to go and return: Nehemiah fixed the time; and the king dismissed him, with letters to the governors of his provinces to forward him in safety through their sc-

<sup>\*</sup> Walls. It is very likely that the walls of Jerusalem had not been rebuilt from the time of their demolition by the Chaldeans; and though Cyrus, at the dissolution of the captivity, gave permission to rebuild the temple, yet he did not allow the same for the city; and probably for this reason, because they were very subject to revolt, and therefore not fit to be trusted with fortifications.

veral districts; and to the keeper of his forests to furnish him with what timber he should require, not only for the gates and beams of the wall, but for a habitation for himself to dwell in, as president of the work, so long as he should have occasion to reside there.

Nehemiah set out, well attended; the king having ordered a party of horse, commanded by several officers, to protect him. When he came to Jerusalem, the people, seeing with what an equipage he came, received him with great respect; only Sanballat, an officer of the Moabites, and Tobiah, a man of note among the Ammonites, two enemies of the Jews, hearing that he came upon some good account to the Israelites, received him with indifference.

Nehemiah, however, took no notice of them; but having refreshed himself three days, went out privately by night to view the dilapidations of the place, which he found every where in a ruinous condition. Having thus satisfied himself as to what was necessary to be done, he summoned the Jews together, put them in mind of the desolate condition in which they were, and exhorted them to assist in repairing the breaches, that they might be no more exposed to their enemies. And to encourage them, he informed them how gracious God had been to them, in giving them instructions in this affair, and how favourable the king had been to him in it. Then relating to them-for their confirmation, what had passed between the king and himself concerning the work, he shewed them the king's commission. This so revived the poor Jews, that they joyfully and unanimously cried out, "Let " us rise and build."

Sanballat and Tobiah had not yet any notice of Nehemiah's commission; and seeing the people begin to clear the ground, in order to rebuild the walls, they in ridicule asked them what they meant, and whether they had a mind to turn rebels? Nehemiah gravely replied, he had sufficient authority for what he did; adding, that the God of heaven would prosper them, and they would persist. "But for you, said he, you have nothing to do "with us, for you have no right, portion or monument

"in Jerusalem, that you or your ancestors did ever be"long to us." Upon this, these enemies of the Jews
were forced to desist, though much against their will, for
they durst not resist the king's authority; and the people
went on heartily with the building. Eliashib, at the
head of the priests, set them a good example, for they
undertook the building of the sheep-gate,\* which was
nearest to the temple, and which they soon finished and
dedicated. In imitation of them, the rest of the people
divided† the work amongst them; some parts were
undertaken by private families; some by corporations;
some by companies or trades; and some were so zealous,
that when they had finished one piece, they undertook
another; so that the whole work went on speedily and
successfully.

The Jews proceeding so cheerfully in this work, began to be formidable to their troublesome neighbours; but none resented it so much as Sanballat and Tobiah, who endeavoured to disturb them, by incensing the Samaritans against them; in whose hearing he said, "What do these feeble Jews mean? Will they fortify "themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish in a "day? Will they reduce these heaps of rubbish to a " regular building?" And to back him, in a scornful, satirical way, said, "A fox will demolish this wall "with her foot." These reproaches served but to inflame the zeal of Nehemiah, who called for vengeance on them that opposed the work; and still encouraging the people to go on, in a short time the wall was joined in all parts, and raised to half its height. This roused Sanballat and Tobiah indeed; who apprehending themselves in danger from the growing greatness of the Jews, resolve to put a stop to their further progress in building. In order to which they engaged in a close

<sup>•</sup> Sheep-gate. It was so called, because the Sheep, which were to be sacrificed, were brought through it.

<sup>†</sup> Divided. See Nehem. ii.

confederacy with the Arabians, Ammonites, and Ashdodims, which they kept secret, intending to surprise the Jews, demolish their works, and put them all to the sword.

This conspiracy was not long a secret; for the neighbouring Jews having notice of the design laid against their brethren, informed them of their danger, and advised them to be on their guard; for the enemy did not intend to attack them openly, but to surprise them. Nehemiah, upon this notice, first addressed himself in prayer to God for help; and then, sending out scouts to observe the motions, and discover the approaches of the enemy, placed a guard well armed with swords, spears and bows, to defend and encourage the workmen. After this, Nehemiah went often in person amongst them, and by precept and his own example encouraged them to trust in the Lord, who had hitherto protected them, putting them in mind that they fought for their wives, brethren and children.

In this posture of defence they continued till they understood, that Sanballat and his party, finding their design discovered, and the Jews prepared to receive them, had laid aside their expedition. Upon which the Jews returned to their work, but with such caution, that, to prevent any surprise, they wrought with their weapons by them, and the overseers of the works stood by them with their swords by their sides. And because, by reason of the length of the wall, the workmen were obliged to be at some distance one from another, Nehemiah had ordered a trumpet always to attend him, giving instructions to the people, that wheresoever they should hear the sound of the trumpet, they should repair thither to relieve them that were engaged, assuring them for their comfort, that their God would fight for them. And to let them see, that himself would do his part in this work, Nehemiah and his guards would not put off their clothes, except to shift themselves for washing.

But whilst they were all thus busily employed in building, a sort of mutiny broke out among the com-

mon people, which might have been of fatal consequence, if it had not been timely composed. The poorer sort of people being continually engaged in the public buildings, had not time\* to cultivate and improve their own estate, by which means they were reduced to great straights, and provisions became very scarce and dear; and the rich, who by the lawf ought to have supported and cherished them, oppressed them with unreasonable usury. This the poor Jews had long endured; having in this time taken up corn upon credit, and not being able to pay, were forced to mortgage their lands, vineyards, olive-yards and houses, to buy provisions; and were so hard pressed, that they had been forced to take up money upon their lands to pay the king's tribute. † But that which went nearest to them was, they had, by the unlawful exactions of their brethren, been compelled to subject their dear children to bondage, and were not able to ransom them, because the rich Jews had

Nehemiah was very much troubled to hear this complaint, but much more for the cause of it; and to put an end to these unnatural and unjustifiable practices, he summoned the people of all degrees and conditions to a general assembly; where he severely reproved the richer sort for oppressing their poor brethren, and reproaching them by his own example, he thus addressed himself to them: "According to our ability, "we have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which

<sup>.\*</sup> Time. This scarcity is not to be supposed to have been occasioned from the neglect of the ground, during the time that the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilding; but from the return of the Israelites from Babylon, when they began to build the temple, which was above four years before. Besides, the building of the wall took up but two and fifty days. See Nehemiah vi. 15.

<sup>+</sup> Law. See Deut. xv. 7, 8.

<sup>†</sup> Tribute. To this all the Jews were subject, Ezra iv. 13, except the priests and officers belonging to the service of the house of God, Ezra vii. 24.

"were sold to the heathen; and will you sell your bre-"thren, or shall they be sold to us?" This was so home a truth upon the oppressing Jews, that they could make no reply: and Nehemiah, taking the advantage of their confusion, told them they did ill in these things, and made themselves a scandal to the heathen their enemies, advising them to desist from these base practices of usury, and restore to their oppressed brethren their lands, vineyards, olive-yards and houses, and the hundredth part of the money, corn, oil and wine, which they had exacted from them. The accusation being true, and all that Nehemiah had urged, matter of fact, they promised to restore them, and require nothing more of them; but to stand to what Nehemiah should decree. Then Nehemiah, to hold them to their promise, made them swear to observe it; and to oblige them to a strict performance of their oath, he shook\* the middle part of his vest, by way of imprecation, and said, "So God shake out "every man from his house, and from his service, "that performeth not this promise; even thus let him "be shaken out, and be made empty."† To this they all agreed, and praised God, and did according to their promise.

Nehemiah, the more powerfully to enforce his admonitions and precepts, did not, after the example of the former governors, his predecessors, exact the daily

<sup>\*</sup> Shook. It was customary with the prophets, as Isaiah, Jeremiah, &c. not only to address themselves to the people by words, but by signs. Thus here, Nehem. v. 13, the shaking of his lap, was an emblem, that they who violated this oath should be shaken off from the protection of God, as he shook his lap, by which action nothing could remain there. And this was a just judgment against the covetous usurers, who with great difficulty could be persuaded to give any thing of their great abundance to the support of the poor: but God, by some hidden, or unforeseen punishment or accident, could shake out their wealth, though against their will, to the relief of the needy.

<sup>†</sup> Empty. That is, shall be deprived of all the fruit and product of his labour and income, as a garment, when it is shaken, has nothing in it.

revenue of forty shekels\* of silver, and the constant furniture of his table with provisions; but remitted them, and all other advantages, which might be burdensome and chargeable to the people: and, during the whole time of his government, which was twelve years, he was so far from purchasing any land, or reaping any benefit at the expence of the people, that he not only refused the allowance which was due to him, as governor, from the people, but at his own charge kept open house, entertaining daily at his table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and their rulers, besides strangers; for which he constantly allowed one ox, six fat sheep, besides fowl in proportion, and every tenth day wine of all sorts. This generous treatment of Nehemiah so gained the favour of the Jews, that they went on cheerfully with the work, and finished the wall, only the gates were not yet hung.

'The successful management of Nehemiah in carrying on, and finishing this mighty wall, set the restless minds of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem at work; who, concluding, that so long as he lived, the Jews would be too powerful for their neighbours, resolve, by some stratagem or other, to take him off, which they knew by open force they were unable to accomplish. Intending therefore by an outward shew of civility to betray him, they sent to invite him to a conference in one of the villages in the plain of Ono, a place belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, designing, when they had him there, to do him a mischief. But whether Nehemiah suspected their malice in this, or not, it is certain he excused himself upon the account of the great work he had in hand, which must stop if he should be absent: and therefore he sent word that he was not at leisure. This message they four times repeated, and he as often returned them the same answer; but at last, Sanballat, perceiving that Nehemiah was too cautious to be ensnared by a general invitation, resolves to try him by

<sup>\*</sup> Forty Shekels. That is, fifty shillings.

a more personal expedient, that should immediately concern him, and on pretence of clearing himself from an accusation, of no less than treason, oblige him to come to him. Therefore the fifth time he sent his servant with a letter in his hand, but open, to this purpose: "It is " reported among the heathen, and Geshem affirms it, "That thou and the Jews intend to rebel; for which "cause thou hast built this wall, that thou mayest be "their king. And thou hast also appointed prophets to "preach of thee at Jerusalem; and to say, There is a king in Judah. These things thou mayest expect, "will come to the king's ear: wherefore come now, and "let us consult what is fit to be done." Nehemiah, conscious of his own innocence, easily saw through this shallow contrivance, and being resolved to make an end of the work which he had so successfully begun and carried on, returned this short and contemptuous answer to the perfidious Sanballat: "There are no such things "done as thou sayest, but they are the inventions of thine " own heart."

Sanballat and his friends are resolved to try some other way to betray the good Nehemiah; and therefore, bribing to their interest Shemajah, the son of Delajah the priest, who was a friend of Nehemiah, they doubted not to succeed at last. To bis house Shemajah repaired, after he had given Sanballat his last answer; but found him shut up, under pretence of a vow, as he said, for the safety of Nehemiah; and pretending to prophesy that his enemies would make an attempt to murder him that night, he would have persuaded Nehemiah to go with him into the inner part of the temple, and secure\* themselves by shutting the doors. Nehemiah did not at first apprehend false Shemajah's design;† however, from a sense of religion and honour he declared he would not quit his station,

<sup>\*</sup> Secure. The temple was much stronger than the city, because as yet the gates were not hung.

<sup>+</sup> Design. Shemajah might do this to render Nehemiah contemptible to his friends, if he had through fear gone into the temple; or he might

telling Shemajah with disdain, it did not become a man in his post to take refuge. After this Nehemiah discovered the whole plot, and that Shemajah, had been bribed by Sanballat and his party; and God preserving him from all their treachery, he in two\* and fifty days completed the whole work; which so affected the enemies of the Jews with fear, that they concluded that a work so great could not have been effected, in such a short space of time, but by the peculiar providence of the God of the Jews.

Good Nehemiah, though he had continually surmounted all the difficulties which were thrown in his way, was still exercised with fresh troubles and dangers; for the princes of Judah held a correspondence with To-

have a design to seize Nehemiah's person when once he had him within the temple, and with the help of other conspirators deliver him up to the enemy. Or that by his thus hiding himself he might encourage the enemy, and discourage the Jews, who by these means would leave the work unfinished.

\* Two and Fifty. Interpreters have not yet agreed from whence to begin this computation. Tremellius and Junius would begin these two and fifty days, after the stone wall was built. Others, that they began after Nehemiah had sent his answer to Sanballat, which is less probable than the other. I rather incline to think, that the whole work, considering the many hands that were employed, and the diligence that was used in it, was begun and ended in two and fifty days; nor can there be much more time allowed for it : for it was in the first month, called by the Jews Nisan, that Nehemiah was in Babylon. See Nehem. ii. 1, and obtained of the king leave to go to Jerusalem. And though we have not an express account what time he spent in his journey, and when he arrived at Jerusalem, yet if we may make conjecture from the time Ezra spent in the same journey, when he came from Babylon to Jerusalem, (allowing for the delay Ezra had at the river Ahava, when he first set out, Ezra viii. 15 and 31,) it is not probable that Nehemiah arrived at Jerusalem till about the end of the fourth month; for though Ezra set out from Babylon on the first day of the first month, he did not reach Jerusalem till the first day of the fifth month: and from thence to the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month may make out the two and fifty days, and Nehemiah's three days' rest before he began, or thereabout.

biah, as they had all along done, which he, by intermarriages had so improved, that they not only gave him an account of what passed at Jerusalem, but had confirmed this correspondence and friendship by oath. Tobiah, by these means, having gained a strong party to his interest, they had the audacity to commend him in the presence of Nehemiah, though they knew him to be an avowed enemy; and, what was still worse, they discovered Nehemiah's counsels to him, which so elevated the vain Ammonite, that he thought by his blustering letters to alarm Nehemiah.

These things increased his care, but not his fear; and therefore to prevent any treachery from his enemies within or without the city, he gave the charge of the gates to his brother Hanani, and to Hananiah, marshal of the palace, two men, in whom he knew he could confide; commanding them not to suffer the gates to be opened till some time after sun-rising; to see them safely barred at night; and to set the watch, which should consist of settled house-keepers, that were diligent men. After this, having found a register of the families of those who came from Babylon first, he assembled the nobility, rulers and people, to make a muster\* of them by their genealogies. By this register some were at a great loss, not knowing their father's pedigree: and some of the priests also were at a loss to prove their genealogy by this register, and not being able to ascertain it, were deposed from their office, as polluted; Nehemiah not permitting them to eat of the holy things, till there should appear a priest, who by divine inspiration should determine, whether they were of the priestly race or not. And now, considering that the city was large,

<sup>\*</sup> Muster. There is some diversity in the account of families given in Ezra ii, and Nehemiah vii. The reason of which difference is by some supposed to be, that the register or catalogue in Ezra was made at Babylon, before they set forward: the other, which Nehemiah found, was made at Jerusalem, after they had arrived there; and alterations might happen in their families in so long a journey.

and the inhabitants but few, it was agreed, that part of the people which did not dwell at Jerusalem, should by lot choose one out of ten, \* to come and live at the metropolis, to be an additional strength to the place. This was looked upon as so tender a mark of affection to the public good, that the inhabitants of Jerusalem thanked these men, who had thus readily offered themselves to come and dwell with them.

The affair of genealogies thus settled, the governor† and people made their free-will offerings for the work of the Lord. The governor presented to the treasury a thousand drams of gold, fifty basons, and five hundred and thirty priests' vestments. Some of the elders gave twenty thousand drams of gold, and two thousand two hundred pieces of silver; and the rest of the people gave twenty thousand drams of gold, and two thousand pieces of silver, and sixty-seven vestments for the

priests.

The affairs of the Jews being reduced to this happy condition of peace and order, Ezra, the learned, pious scribe and priest, at the request of the people, produced the book of the law, which the Lord by Moses had commanded the children of Israel to observe; and standing in the street, before the water-gate, upon an eminence, that he might be seen and heard by the people, he opened the book in sight of them all; at which they stood up: and having given thanks to the Lord, they all lifted up their hands, and cried, Amen, Amen; and bowing their heads, they worshipped the Lord with most profound reverence. The company being divided into several parts, Ezra, with thirteen more, read and ex-

<sup>\*</sup> Ten. See Nehemiah xi. 1.

<sup>†</sup> Governor. He is called in Nehem. vii. 70, and also in Ezra, Tirshatha, which in Nehemiah viii. 9, is explained: The word Tirshatha in the Persian and Chaldean tongues signifies a governor or president. Some will have it to be a Cognomen; though among the Chaldeans it was taken for a name of magistracy or dignity.

pounded the law to them, which they heard with such attention and devotion, that being sensible how much they had transgressed it, they mourned and wept. But Ezra and his assistants comforted them, telling them, that it was not a time for them to mourn and weep, because it was a day \* holy to the Lord God; but bid them be cheerful, and eat and drink of the best, and send part of their provisions to the poor, for whom nothing was provided. The people readily obeyed, and went their wav.

The next day, the chief of the fathers of all the people assembled again to be further instructed in the law; and upon search it was found, † that the children of Israel should dwell in booths, in the feast of the seventh‡ month, and that they should cause proclamation to be made in all other cities, as well as in Jerusalem.—That the people should go forth and gather olive-branches, pine-branches, myrtle-branches, palm-branches, and branches of trees

thick with leaves, to form booths.

The people, who were now become very sensible of the danger of transgressing the law, by the woful experience of their ancestors, and some by their own, immediately went out and collected branches to make themselves booths; some upon the tops of their houses, others in their courts; some in the courts of the temple, and others in the streets. And this feast they celebrated with great solemnity and joy; and so much the more, because it had not been observed from the days of Joshua & till now; which was above a thousand years.

On the four and twentieth day of the same month the Jews assembled again, but upon a different occasion; for they appeared in sackcloth, with earth upon their heads,

<sup>\*</sup> Day. Because it was the Sabbath.

<sup>†</sup> Found. See Levit. xxiii. 40.

<sup>‡</sup> Seventh. This was the feast of tabernacles.

<sup>§</sup> Joshua. See Nehemiah viii. 17.

fasting and mourning, confessing their own sins, and deprecating the judgments due to their iniquities, and to those of their fathers. Then, acknowledging the omnipotence of God, in creating and preserving all things, and enumerating his gracious mercies to their fathers, from the time of the covenant made with Abraham, they recognized all the grand instances of his providence, in delivering them from their enemies and persecutors; and deploring their fathers' and their own disobedience and rebellion, they acknowledged that they were deservedly liable to his justice. Finally, they made a covenant with the Lord, that they would walk in his law, which was given by Moses. And to oblige them to the more strict performance of this covenant, it was engrossed, and the princes, priests and Levites set their seals to it. And those who did not set their seals, of whatever age, sex or condition, bound themselves with an oath to ob-

Nehemiah having settled the affairs both of church and state in Jerusalem, according to his promise to the king, returned to the court at Babylon; where he had not continued above a year at most, before the Jews relapsed into their old corruptions, and became very irregular. All which was owing to the mismanagement of Eliashib the high-priest; who having the charge of the treasury, and being allied to Tobiah, the Jews' great enemy, had prepared an apartment for him in the temple, in the place where they used to deposit the offerings, and other holy things, appointed for the service of the temple and priests.

This intimacy between Eliashib and Tobiah, was the occasion of much mischief and confusion; for by conversing with the heathen, they soon broke the covenant they had so lately made, profaning the sabbath, and mixing in marriage with them. So that when Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem, he found all in the utmost disorder. It was matter of great concern and grief to him, to see the people led away, and debauched in their principles, by a man that was an open enemy to them; and that an apartment should be prepared in the house of

God, for one that was a declared enemy to his worship. This so inflamed the zeal of good Nehemiah, that he was resolved to put an end to these irregularities; but the corruption having become so general, he found himself under the necessity of using caution in his design, to prevent tumult; for he found that Tobiah had insinuated himself into the good opinion of most of the people, and especi-

ally those of note.

The first step which he took towards this reformation, to convince them of their errors, was, in causing the book of the law to be read publicly in the hearing of the people; in which it was found, "That the Ammonite\* "and the Moabite should not come unto the congrega-"tion of God for ever; because they met not the chil-"dren of Israel with refreshment of bread and water, when "they came out of Egypt, but hired Balaam against them, "to curse them; though God turned the curse into a

" blessing."

The people no sooner heard this part of the law, but they were sensible of their transgression; and to shew their readiness to reform, they separated from the mixed multitude. This gave Nehemiah an easy opportunity of getting rid of Tobiah, who was an Ammonite: for the law being positive, and the people, by his prudent conduct, disposed to obey it, he threw Tobiah's furniture out of the sacred chamber, caused it to be cleansed, and brought the vessels of the temple, with the offerings and incense, into it again. And finding that, in his absence, the allowance of the Levites had been withdrawn, and that they were forced to quit the ministerial service and betake themselves to the country for maintenance, Nehemiah expostulated with the rulers concerning this neglect of the service of the house of God; and bringing back the Levites to their offices, he ordered the people to bring in the tithes of corn, wine and oil into the treasury. and appointed treasurers and deputies to receive and distribute them.

Ammonite. See Numb. xxii. 5, 6, and Deut. xxiii. 3, 4.

The next grievance the pious governor had to redress, was the profanation of the sabbath; on which day the Jews had, during his absence, done all manner of servile work, treading their wine-presses, and bringing in their corn, wine, grapes, figs, and all manner of burdens into Jerusalem upon asses, as on common days: and they not only did this, but suffered strangers, the Tyrians, to bring fish, and all manner of wares, and sell them on the sabbath in Jerusalem. Against these irreligious and profane practices Nehemiah warmly protested, saying, "What an " evil thing is this that you do in profaning the sabbath-"day! Did not your fathers do thus; and did not our "God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city for "such things? Yet you bring more wrath upon Israel, " by profaning the sabbath." And to convince them that he was determined to make a thorough reformation amongst them, he issued a strict order, that towards the evening before the sabbath, the city gates should be shut, and not opened till the sabbath was over; and that this order might be duly observed, he appointed some of his own servants to guard the gates, and suffer no burden to be brought in on the sabbath-day. The chapmen and merchants, who came, as usual, over night with their goods, were surprised to find the gates shut against them; and being thus disappointed were obliged to take up their lodging without the walls of Jerusalem. This they did once or twice, though Nehemiah reproved them for it; wherefore he at last told them, if they attempted to repeat the offence, he would apprehend them. Upon which they desisted: but, suspecting that they might, by some contrivance or other, attempt it again, he commanded the Levites to cleanse themselves, and take up their station at the gate, and guard it diligently, that the sabbath-day might be kept holy. Thus with great care and difficulty this good man once more established the worship of the Lord at Jerusalem.

Nehemiah, as was observed, upon his return from Babylon to Jerusalem, in order to convince the Jews of their transgressions, caused the book of the law to be read before the people, which expressly declared against all

conversation with the Ammonites and Moabites; and the people accordingly separated from the mixed multitude. But the case of mixed marriages with the heathen had taken such deep root that Nehemiah found it a difficult matter to eradicate it: for which cause, he in nothing expressed a warmer zeal than against these forbidden marriages, which were made between the Jews and other nations, and which he well knew had in former ages betrayed the Israelites into idolatry and other abominations; the fatal consequence of which he was at this time the more active to prevent. Finding, therefore, that they had not so thoroughly reformed as they promised, and that there were among them some Jews who had married wives of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab; whose children, he observed, spake a language half Ashdodite and half Jewish, but neither perfectly, he debated with them on the unreasonableness of this mixed marriage, and the visible consequence of it in the broken mongrel speech of their children, who in time would quite forget their native language. This he argued warmly with them, and they so insolently defended themselves, that he was provoked to curse\* them; and they persisting, he smote† some of them; and being incensed to the last degree, he plucked their hair t off, and made them swear by the Lord that they should not any more mix in marriage with the heathen nations: " For, said he, did not Solomon, king of 66 Israel, sin by doing these things? Though there was

<sup>\*</sup> Curse. We are not to ascribe this to extreme anger or private resentment; but he acted as the minister of God, in declaring the curses of his word against such atrocious and hardened transgressors.

<sup>+</sup> Smote. This was usual among the Jews, their malefactors being buffeted either by the lictors or the mob. See Matt. xxvi. 67.

<sup>‡</sup> Hair. The depriving the head of its natural ornament was a special punishment among the ancients; as among the Athenians it was part of the punishment for adulterers; and Nehemiah seems to have inflicted this as a punishment on them for their wantonness and luxury; which he did in this manner, that the guilty might see their liberty changed into a state of slavery. For baldness was a symbol of servitude, as hair was of liberty, and it so continues among the eastern

"no king among the heathen like unto him; though "he was beloved of his God, who made him king over "all Israel; yet he was betrayed by strange women to " commit idolatry. Is it reasonable then that we should "imitate your example, to do this great evil, to trans-"gress against our God, in marrying strange wives?" And to shew himself an impartial judge in his administration, he made no distinction of quality or condition among them, for he punished all alike, whom he found guilty; an instance of which was one of the sons of Jojada, the son of Eliashib the high-priest; who having married the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite, was by Nehemiah's command expelled the city. Then praying to God to do justice on those that defiled the priesthood, and violated the covenant between the priests and Levites, and the Lord, he proceeded to purge the place from all profanation of strangers, appointing the priests and Levites their several apartments and offices, setting out the wood for the offering, and taking care of the first-fruits.

In this happy condition did this good man leave the Jews; but notwithstanding his pious care and pains to reform them, they soon after his death returned to their former wicked courses, as appears by the expostulatory reproaches of Malachi;\* whom the Lord not long after

nations, and in China, particularly since their subjugation to the Tartars, to this day.

It was likewise a token of mourning, see Isaiah xv. 2, and Ezek. xxvii. 37. But, in general, baldness was a mark of extreme ignominy among the Jews. Yet in this case here, Neh. xiii. 25, it may look like a symbol of purgation, which was used by the Levites, Lepers, and foreign women taken in war, before they were Joined in marriage with the Jews.

<sup>\*</sup> Malachi. He was one of the three prophets whom God raised up for the comfort of the Jews after the captivity, and was the last of those, of whom we have any writing, or mention in the Old Testament. After him there was none till John Baptist was sent, which was either a token of God's wrath, or an admonition, that they should with more fervent desire look for the coming of the Messiah.

commissioned to reprove them. He having at first demonstrated the particular esteem of God to the house of Israel in preferring\* them to that of Esau, taxes them with their ingratitude, and neglect of his worship, but more especially his priests, whom he charges with irreligious and profane approaches to the altar; with corrupting the covenant of Levi, and by giving an ill example in themselves, they had occasioned many to fall from the law. After which he threatens to judge them for all their sins, particularly for marrying with the heathen, and mocking God with their vain shews and pretences of religion, whilst they were notoriously guilty of sorcery, adultery, perjury, and oppression. He charged the people with sacrilege, in detaining the tithes and offerings; which being a part of the law, and appropriated to the maintenance of the priests and Levites, could not be detained without manifest violence and injustice; for which he severely reproached them. After this he gives a hint of God's calling the Gentiles; promising the coming of the messenger of the covenant, whom they all desired. "Then," says he, † "shall the offerings of Judah "and Jerusalem be acceptable unto the Lord, as in old "times." And for the comfort of the good and pious, who had persevered in their duty, and stedfastly believed God's word; he declared, that God would not forget his

<sup>\*</sup> Preferring. Here in Malachi, i. 3, God is said to have hated Esau, and in other places the word hate is used in a severer sense than the original allows. For translators should have considered, that the word, which here and elsewhere on the same occasion, is rendered to hate, signifies also to love less, or to take less care of a thing, and not to intend any injury. And that it is thus to be taken here, appears from a parallel text in St. Matth. x. 37, where our Saviour says, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." Therefore it is but reasonable to translate the words of the apostle St. Paul, Rom. i. 13, taken out of Malachi i. 3, I have loved Jacob more than Esau; because God's dealing towards the Edomites does not shew any real hatred against them, but only that he favoured them less than the descendants of Jacob.

<sup>+</sup> He. See Malachi, iii. 4.

promise to their fathers, but would in his own good time fulfil it; assuring them, that when that day should come, the proud, and all that had done wickedly, should be utterly extirpated: but those, that had feared the Lord, should enjoy prosperity and all manner of plenty: then promising them victory in those days over their enemies, whom they should trample as dust under their feet, he bids them remember the law of Moses, the servant of the Lord, which he gave him in mount Horeb. And at last, as a pledge of the completion of all that he had promised concerning the coming of the Messiah, he tells them the Lord would send Elias\* the prophet before that great and terrible day, the happy effect of which should be, the turning† the hearts of the fathers to their children, and of the children to their fathers.

<sup>\*</sup> Elias. That is, St. John Baptist; who is here called Elias, because he came in the spirit of Elias, Luke i. 17, Matth. xi. 14, and xvii. 11, 12; as Elias did before, to correct the depraved manners, and corrupt doctrine of the Jews, sparing neither prince nor people, but reproving both with equal zeal and fervour.

<sup>†</sup> Turning. That is, should reconcile those that are at variance, and settle all in unanimity and concord. For from the time of the Maccabees to the coming of Christ, Judea had not only been worried with foreign enemies, but civil discords occasioned by the different sects that were among them; the most prevalent on either side being those of the Sadducees and Pharisees; which threw that nation, and especially the city of Jerusalem, into terrible convulsions, and which the prophet literally foretold (see Micah vii. 6, according to the text here in Malachi, iv. 6. Besides, this was very justly adapted to the character of the Messiah, who is by the prophet Isaiah called the Prince of peace; and answerably to that character, at his birth, the world enjoyed profound peace and tranquillity.

## COMPLETE

## HISTORY

OF THE

## Holy Wible.

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

The continuation,\* from the death of Nehemiah, to the birth of Christ.

God having withdrawn his Spirit from the prophets, left the Jews to govern themselves according to their own laws, which for a time they did, enjoying their religion in full liberty, having High-priests, in whom the chief government was vested; but they remained subject to the dominion of the Persians, so long as that empire continued.

<sup>\*</sup> Continuation. From the death of Nehemiah to the birth of our Saviour Christ, among the various computations, there are reckoned at least four hundred years; in which time many and great revolutions happened in the Jewish state, and the church of God underwent very great and heavy persecutions, both from the Greeks and Romans. The account of which we must take partly from the Apochryphal books of the Maccabees, and partly from Josephus and other historians, to continue the series of history to our Saviour's time. As for the alterations of the Greek government over Judea, by the Egyptians, Syrians, and Romans, they were literally foretold by Daniel, ch. xi.

Towards the end of the reign of Darius Codamannus, an unhappy event occurred, which threw the Jewish state into great confusion and disorder, and had like to have proved fatal to them. For Manasses, brother of Jaddus \* the high-priest, and colleague with him, having married Nicaso the daughter of Sanballat, the old enemy of the Jews, the elders of Jerusalem wisely foreseeing the fatal consequence of such marriages, as knowing them to have been in a great measure the cause of their late captivity, and other judgments sent amongst them, demand of Manasses, either to dismiss his wife, or no more to approach the altar.

In this act his brother Jaddua concurred, and forced him to desist from the office of pontiff. Manasses, upon this, repaired to his father-in-law Sanballat, to whom he declared, that though he passionately loved his daughter, yet he was unwilling, for her sake, to be deprived of the priesthood, which was a native honour, and in the highest esteem among the Jews. Sanballat, to quiet Manasses, told him he should not only be continued in the priesthood, but he would procure the pontificate for him, and make him prince of the whole province of Judea, provided he would continue his affection to his daughter, and return to her as his wife; adding, that he would build a temple on mount Gerizim superior to that in Jerusalem: and all this he engaged to perform by the power and consent of Darius. These promises so elevated the ambition of Manasses; that he tarried with his father-in-law; during which time many of the priests and Israelites, who had engaged in these forbidden marriages, revolted to Manasses; Sanballat furnishing them with houses and lands, to encourage his son-in-law's ambitious hopes; which was the occasion of great mutiny and disorder in the Jewish state.

About this time, Darius, hearing that Alexander, the Great, had passed the Hellespont, and invaded Asia, and

<sup>\*</sup> Jaddus. Prideaux as well as Josephus call this high-priest Jaddua.

had defeated his army at the river Granicus, resolved at the streights of Cilicia to stop his further progress. Sanballat, overjoyed at the approach of Darius, assured his son-in-law of the performance of his promise as soon as Darius returned from the victory. But the event disappointed their hopes; for the victorious Macedonian, though greatly inferior in numbers, routed Darius's army, took his mother, wife, and children prisoners, and forces him to fly back into Persia. Alexander upon this marched directly into Syria, took Damascus and Sidon, and laid siege to Tyre. Then sending letters to Jaddua the Highpriest, he demanded subsistence for his army, and the same allegiance and respect usually paid to Darius. Jaddua returned answer, that he had sworn not to take arms against Darius, and that he would keep his oath inviolable as long as he lived. Alexander, enraged at this answer, threatened the pontiff that he would soon be with him, and make him know to whom his allegiance was due; but still carried on the siege of Tyre with all imaginable diligence.

In the mean time Sanballat, taking this opportunity, revolted from Darius, and with eight thousand men of his own province, went over to Alexander, whom he found in his camp before Tyre, carrying on the siege. Sanballat without scruple acknowledges Alexander for his sovereign, and is kindly received by him. This early revolt and favourable reception of Sanballat, gave him opportunity and encouragement to speak what he pleased Taking a fit time, he told him that Mato Alexander. nasses his son-in-law was brother to Jaddua the Highpriest; that having in discontent left Jerusalem, and being followed by many of the Jews, who were of his party, he was inclined to build a temple in his province. Then, by way of advice, he assured Alexander that it would be of great advantage to his interest; for thus he would divide the strength of the Jews. Alexander approved of what he proposed, and accordingly Sanballat crected a temple, and constituted his son-in-law Manasses priest of it; by which he presumed, that he should leave

a lasting monument of honour to the posterity of his

daughter.

After seven months spent in the siege of Tyre, and two in that of Gaza, Sanballat died, and Alexander, at the head of his victorious troops, hastened to Jerusalem, to take revenge for the late neglect of his proffered friendship. Jaddua, knowing the city unable to oppose the progress of the victorious monarch, commended the public safety to the protection of God, to whom he offered prayers and sacrifice. The night before Alexander approached the city, Jaddua had a vision, in which he was encouraged to go out and meet the conqueror, with assurance of security. Upon this he assembled the priests and people, whom he acquainted with the vision; and according to his direction, the rest of the priests put on their habits, and the people clothed themselves in white, and with Jaddua at their head, went out to meet the conqueror. Alexander was amazed at this unusual and venerable pomp; but that which most surprised him, was to see the high-priest clothed in the same manner as he had seen one in a dream whilst he was in Macedon, who assured him that he should conquer Persia. Upon which Alexander, bowed himself before Jaddua, worshipped the name of God, which was written on the plate that was on the forehead of the high-priest, and received him graciously. After this they went into the city, and Alexander, by the advice of Jaddua, offered sacrifice in the temple, where they shewed him the prophecy of Daniel, which foretold that a Grecian should subdue the Persians: upon which he expressed great satisfaction, and promised the Jews that he would grant them whatsoever they desired. Jaddua then requested, that they might live according to their own laws, and that he would remit the tribute of the seventh year. These petitions he readily granted, and gave leave likewise at their request, to the Jews that lived in Babylon and Media to do the same. After which several Jews followed Alexander in his other expeditions.

Upon the death of Alexander, the empire was divided among several successors, and Syria falling to the lot of

Seleucus, the Jews ought of course to have been subject to him; but Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, king of Egypt, having possessed himself of Syria by stratagem, took Jerusalem, entering it on the sabbath-day, when the inhabitants durst not defend themselves. He carried away many of the Jews into Egypt, Cyrene, and other parts of Libya. Many also went voluntarily into Egypt, where Ptolemy entertained them in a very friendly manner, making several of them free of the city of Alexandria. Ptolemy Philadelphus, the son and successor of Ptolemy Lagus, caused the law to be translated into Greek by seventy-two interpreters, whom he sent for from Jerusalem; and dismissing several of the captive Jews, he gave many rich presents to the temple at Jerusalem, of an immense value. Nor was Ptolemy Philadelphus the only patron and favourer of the Jews; Seleucus Nicanor made them free of the city of Antioch, and other cities of Syria.

Antiochus the Great, becoming king of Asia, made war on Ptolemy Epiphanes, king of Egypt, and Syria became the seat of the war, by which the Jews suffered greatly; for the fortune of war inclining sometimes to one king, and sometimes to the other, Judea was miserably harassed on both sides. Antiochus in the end being victorious, the Jews submitted to him, received him with his army into their city, and joined with him in the recovery of the citadel of Jerusalem, which was held by a garrison left there by Scopas, Ptolemy's general. Antiochus in return gave them liberty to live and govern according to their own laws, and granted them several privileges. But afterwards king Antiochus, concluding a peace with Ptolemy, gave him his daughter in marriage, assigning for her dowry Cœlo-Syria, Phænicia, Judea, and Samaria. To this king of Egypt, Onias,\*

the high-priest refused to pay tribute; upon which king Ptolemy prepared to invade Judea: but by the

<sup>\*</sup> Onias. He was the son of Jaddua, the High-priest, and succeeded him.

prudent management of Josephus,\* nephew to Onias, all

things were reconciled, and the tribute-money paid.

After the death of Ptolemy Epiphanes, Seleucus Philopater, king of Asia, at first favoured the Jews, and supplied them with all things requisite for the service of the temple, and the sacrifices, at his own expence; but some time after being informed by one Simon, of the tribe of Benjamin, that there were great treasures in the temple, he sent Heliodorust to take them away; who going into the temple with that intent, as he was entering the sacred treasury, to his great amazement he was met by angels of fire, who seemed to be on horseback, armed to defend the place against this sacrilegious attempt. The infidel general was struck down, lost his speech and senses, and did not recover till the Highpriest Onias prayed for him. ± Some time afterwards Heliodorus aspiring to the crown, murdered Seleucus in hopes of succeeding him; but Eumenes and Attalus drove him from thence, and set up Antiochus Epiphanes, son to Antiochus the Great. This prince was the cause of great affliction to the Jews; for he deposed Onias, and put his brother Jason in his place, who upon that account had promised to pay Antiochus three thousand sixhundred talents of silver yearly. Jason had no sooner

<sup>\*</sup> Joseph. His mother was sister to Onias the High-priest. Though he was but young, he was eminent for prudence, justice, and other virtues, which made him very much regarded in the Jewish state. And he taking upon him to chide his uncle Onias for covetousness, and neglect of the public good, did by his good reasons convince him of his error, and persuaded Onias to leave the management of the whole matter to him, which he effected to the satisfaction of king Ptolemy and the Jews, and his own reputation and advantage. See Joseph. l. xii. c. 4.

<sup>†</sup> Heliodorus. He is by Josephus called Apollonius.

<sup>‡</sup> Him. It is to be recollected, that this marvellous story does not rest upon the authority of the inspired volume.

Antiochus. This is that wicked Antiochus, mentioned in 1 Macc. ii. v. 11.

usurped the High-priest's office, but he altered the form of divine worship, and changed the customs of the Jews, which occasioned a general corruption in the Jewish economy, and for which God raised them a scourge out of the cause of their offence; for they needed not a worse enemy than Antiochus to punish them, who raged against them with the utmost barbarity.

After Antiochus had been in Egypt, he came in person to Jerusalem, where he was received in great pomp by Jason, who sometime after this sending one Menelaus with money to the king, Menelaus supplanted him, purchasing the priesthood of the king, and expelling Jason, who thereupon withdrew into the country of the Ammonites, wait-

ing a turn of fortune in his favour.

Menelaus did not long enjoy his ill-gotten promotion; for failing in his payment he surrendered the priesthood to his brother Lysimachus; but afterwards repenting of his tameness in delivering it up, he sold the sacred vessels to recover it; and lest Onias, the deposed pontiff, who was withdrawn to Daphne, should oppose him in his design, he procured him to be murdered by Andronicus, whom justice soon overtook; for Antiochus first ordered him to be divested of the purple, then led through the city to the place where he had murdered Onias, and there put to death. The people of Jerusalem mutinying against Lysimachus, slew him. Menelaus, who was the contriver of all these mischiefs, found means to clear himself to Antiochus, and get his accusers condemned. Jason hearing that Antiochus was preparing to invade Egypt, takes the opportunity of his absence, and with a thousand men attacks Jerusalem, by this means hoping to recover the High-priesthood, he soon made himself master of the city, but Menclaus retiring into the citadel, he could not reach him; wherefore revenging himself upon the people, he slew many of them, and then made a hasty retreat into the country of the Ammonites: soon after which, he was seized, and imprisoned by Aretas, king of Arabia, but making his escape, he fled from one city to another, and afterward died at Lacedemon.

Antiochus, who was then in Egypt, hearing of these events, and suspecting that Judea might revolt from him, returned in a rage against the Jews for making these commotions, and entering the city by force, put the inhabitants to the sword, for eighty thousand were slain in three days, forty thousand taken prisoners, and as many sold for slaves. Then profaning the temple with his irreverend and abominable approaches, he entered it, attended with the execrable traitor Menelaus, whence they sacrilegiously conveyed what treasure they could find. And to torment the wretched Jews the more, Antiochus made one Philip, a Phrygian, a man more barbarous and inhuman than himself, governor of Jerusalem, and Andronicus, governor of Gerizim, joining Menelaus in commission with both, which was grievous to the poor people, whom he used most barbarously. He sent Apollonius, one of king Antiochus's generals, with an army of two and twenty thousand men to Jerusalem, to kill what men remained, and to sell the women and children. Apollonius coming before Jerusalem, made no offer of attacking the town till the sabbath, from whence the Jews concluded themselves secure. But whilst they were at their devotions on the sabbath, Apollonius entered the city, massacred many of the inhabitants, plundered the place, led away the women and children captives, and part of the rest they obliged to fly. After this Antiochus orders that the Jews should embrace the religion of the Gentiles, caused the temple at Jerusalem to be called the temple of Olympian Jove, filled it with abominations, and obliged the Jews to sacrifice to idols upon pain of death. Those who met in caves to keep the sabbath were burnt; the book of the law was cast into the fire; the circumcision of infants was forbidden; and women accused of having circumcisied their children were publicly led about the city with their infants hanging at their breasts, and then cast headlong from the walls. In short, no manner of cruelty was omitted to compel the Jews to desert their religion.

During this terrible persecution, some of these wretched people yielded to force; but many chose rather to die than

forsake the law of their God. Among these last was Eleazar, a doctor of the law, a very aged man, and of a venerable aspect. To afflict this good old man the more, the first test they put him to, was to make him eat swine's flesh, which they forced into his mouth; but he, choosing rather to die gloriously than live ignominiously, spit it out. Some of those who had the charge of this part of the persecution, in pity to his age, and out of former gave him leave to elude the sentence by taking a piece of any other flesh, and eating it as swine's flesh. But he considering this as a vile collusion and hypocrisy, told them he would not purchase his life at that sordid rate, but desired them to dispatch him rather than let him be guilty of dissimulation, and stain the honour of his grey hairs with so base an act. Upon this, his persecutors, changing their pity into cruelty, fell upon him, and beat him to death, which he resolutely suffered. rather than dishonour God by violating his science.

The next instance of religious fortitude was that of the heroine Solomona and her seven sons, who were by order of Antiochus brought from their habitation to Antioch. The king pretending pity to their youth, and respect to their family, (which was noble) persuaded them to renounce their religion, and embrace that of the Gentiles, promising them great rewards and promotion if they would comply; but if they refused, they must expect no mercy. Then ordering variety of tortures which he had provided, to be shewed them, he thought to terrify them with the sad prospect of what they were likely to suffer. However, these instruments and engines of death could no more terrify, than the allurements of the tyrant could entice them; but inspired with a holy zeal, they unanimously declared their stedfast adherence to the law of God, and the precepts which he delivered by Moses, assuring him that his cruelty could not hurt them; and all the effect their pains could produce, would be to secure to them the gracious rewards promised to unshaken patience and injured virtue; cautioning him at the same time, of the dreadful consequences to himself; for by the

murder of so many innocent men he would arm the divine vengeance against him, and for the temporal pains which he inflicted on them, would himself become ob-

noxious to everlasting torments.

The constancy and zeal of these brave youth so enraged the tyrant, that he gave the word for the exceutioners to bring the eldest to the torture, which they immediately did; and stripping off his clothes, they bound his hands and arms in a posture for receiving the scourge, which he enduring with admirable patience; and finding that they wearied themselves more than him with this sort of punishment, they bound him upon the wheel. The noble youth lying extended here with his bones broken, and joints dislocated, reproached his tormentor thus, "O execrable tyrant, and persecutor of heaven! Thou "dost not treat me thus barbarously for any breach of "divine or human laws, but for my zeal to God and his "holy ordinances." Then the soldiers advising him to save his life by complying, he continued; "You may " exercise your cruelty upon my body, but you cannot "torture my mind; that is out of your reach; and I will " convince you by this trial upon my person, that it is "the peculiar glory of the Hebrew nation to be invin-"cibly firm in their sufferings for God and a good con-"science." Then extending his body still more, they turned him to the flames, where they held him till his bowels burst, and nothing of human form was left, but a skeleton of bones. These exquisite tortures this brave youth bore with such magnanimity, as if the fire had only served to refine him into an immortal creature. At last, nature being wasted with repeated tortures, he thus took his leave of his brethren: "Be sure you follow my ex-"ample, and desert me not in this noble conflict. Shame "the tyrant with your sufferings, and die gloriously in "the service of God, who will humble this bloody mon-" ster with punishments as uncommon and amazing as his " own pride and cruelty." And thus this holy youth closed his painful life.

The second brother, with the same undaunted courage, advanced to this tragical stage; where being demanded

whether he would eat of their sacrificed meat, and refusing, the tormentors with pincers drew off all the flesh from the muscles of his neck to the chin, and flayed off all the hair and skin of his beard, face, and head. And having remained some time a sad spectacle to the bloody tormentors, he thus took his leave of them and the world. "How welcome is death in any shape to him that suffers "for truth and religion? The pleasure of an innocent " mind, and the comfort of a clear conscience soften my " sufferings, and support my spirits, whilst thou art racked " with the cutting apprehensions of a guilty mind. Thy " cruelties I suffer with more pleasure than thou canst " execute them; for thy own heart must tell thee, that "thou dost wickedly in punishing the innocent for as-" serting the truth, and persevering in the worship and "love of God, for which be assured thou wilt not escape "the terrible vengeance of a just and angry God." The pious hero thus persevering in the defence of his religion, made his way to heaven through blood and torments.

The third brother, far from being daunted at the sight of what the former endured, and being pressed by the tyrant to take warning by their death, he angrily replied, "The same father and mother brought us into the world, " and the same master formed our minds with the same " principles: think not therefore that I will by any pu-"sillanimous retreat endeavour to evade thy cruelty, and "desert the glorious cause of suffering for our religion. "Lose no time, for I come prepared to suffer, not to "make speeches." This answer, delivered with an air of resolution, so enraged the tyrant, that he thought, if possible, to augment his tortures; therefore commanded the executioners to fix his hands and his feet in the screws, where with a violent wrench they dislocated all the joints of his fingers and toes at once. This done, they continued to draw the engine yet higher, till they had twisted his legs and arms, and shoulder-bones out of their sockets; and finding him still to survive all these distortions, dragged off his skin at the ends of his fingers, and flayed him from the very crown of his head. And

not content to have mangled his body after this merciless manner, they dragged him to the wheel, where being yet more distended upon the pins and screws, he saw his several parts burst asunder, his flesh drop off by piecemeals, and his bowels and blood gush out. His tormentors being wearied with their continual applications of cruelty, and nature just exhausted in the heroic youth, he closed this bloody scene with a dreadful prediction of the tyrant's fate: "O wicked and most inhuman of all "tyrants, we suffer thus for the love of God, and his "most righteous law; but thou, who art the cause of "all this injustice and cruelty, shalt suffer endless torments."

The fourth brother being dragged to execution, is persuaded to consider and avoid inevitable destruction, which he saw preparing for him. But he, resolving not to stain the honour of his family, and disgrace the cause of religion by any pusillanimous act, replied, "The sight " of all your tortures in their dismal appearances cannot "affright me to derogate from the noble example of my "brethren. Let thy tortures be as extravagant as thy " malice and cruelty can invent, they shall only serve to " prove me a branch of the same stock, and animated "with the very same soul with those whose blood thy "impious hands have spilt." The barbarous Antiochus was so incensed at this, that he commanded the executioners to cut out his tongue. But the holy youth, not in the least terrified with his threatenings, cried out: "Here "it is ready for thy wicked agents to exercise their "cruelty upon: but know, thou tyrant, that by de-" priving me of the use of this organ of speech, thou " canst not make my reason dumb. O that I might, to "glorify God, lose my life by inches! But as for thee, "guilt and vengeance will soon overtake thee, who "cuttest out this inoffensive tongue, that hath been em-" ployed in making melody, and singing praises to God, "who formed it for that purpose." Then the tormentors cut out his tongue, and tied it to the trunk of his body, which being exhausted with pain, and miserably mangled, he joyfully ended his course.

The fifth brother, eager to obtain his share in this honourable conflict, boldly stepped forward, uncalled for, and offered himself to the torture, addressing the king thus: "Thou seest, most inhuman tyrant, I wait not "thy tedious orders, but voluntarily offer myself to the "trial, and dare thy cruelty in the defence of my faith. "The sooner thou dispatchest me, the sooner will my "happiness be complete, and thine iniquities make thee " ripe for vengeance. Tell me, thou destroyer of man-"kind, what could provoke thee to torment and murder "the innocent? Is it a crime to serve that God who cre-"ated the world? And shall we not worship him by "whom we live, and who hath instituted the methods by "which we are to regulate our lives? In this we defy "thy tortures, and despise thy punishments, which will "translate us to a happy eternity, and thee to endless "torments." At these words the executioners seized, and bound him to the wheel, and drawing the screws strait, they at once dislocated the joints of his limbs and back, so that he twisted round the wheel; and being almost strangled, he thus took his leave: "Thou little "dost imagine, most execrable tyrant, the benefit thy " cruelty procures to us; for the more thou ragest against "us in these unheard of tortures, the more acceptable "dost thou render us to God. This momentary pain will "issue in everlasting rest, and every torture is but an "occasion of exercising our patience."

The sixth brother being brought forward, the tyrant asked him whether he would accept of deliverance? To which the brave youth replied; "Though I am inferior in years to my brothers that have suffered before me, yet is my soul equal in magnanimity to theirs. And as we were nourished and educated together in the fear of God, we ought to persist in the same to death. Think not therefore to terrify or persuade me to relinquish the glorious cause of religion by the apprehension of torture, for I am ready to suffer as they have done; and know, that God will support me in the deference of a good conscience under the greatest pains thou canst inflict." Antiochus seeing him thus reso-

lute, commands him to be fastened to the wheel; and after having broken and distorted all his bones, they put fire under him. Then the soldiers heated spits and spears red hot, and thrust them into his back and sides, till his bowels were burnt up, while he cried, "O glorious con-"flict, in which so many brethren have engaged for their "religion, and come off with conquest! I will bear my "brethren company in so noble a death, and add to the "number of plagues due to thee, O wicked inventor of "artful cruelty, and implacable foe of all that adhere to "the true religion! Six of us have now baffled thy ma-"lice and rage; for I must needs account thee baffled, "who hast without success attempted to force us from "our duty. Thy fires, methinks, are cold; thy racks "easy; and thy guards are now no longer tormentors "and executioners, but defenders and promoters of our "law and its honour, since they assist us in giving testi-"mony to it, and contribute to the triumphs of the reli-"gion they are not able to suppress." Having made an end of speaking, and just ready to expire, they dispatched him by casting him into a cauldron of boiling liquor.

And now the seventh and youngest brother appeared: whom, when the tyrant saw, fettered and pinioned, though he had been so implacably outrageous against the rest, his hard heart began a little to relent; therefore calling him up to the throne where he sat, he began to try him with soft words and fair means. "You see," said he, "young man, the miserable end to which the rest of your family have by their own obstinacy brought themselves, and which will be your fate in a few minutes, if by their example you will not become wiser. But I hope better things from you; and for an encouragement of your better behaviour, I make you a generous offer of my esteem and friendship, and promise to promote you to

" places of honour and profit."

Then addressing himself to the mother of these braveyouth, who had hitherto been a witness of her children's sufferings, with a pretended compassion for her loss, he

intreated her to prevail upon her child, in pity to herself at least, to save this small remnant of her family, and not to give herself the affliction of having all her offspring so miserably torn away at once. But she, worthy of the honour of being mother to such godly heroes, whispered thus to her son in the Hebrew language: "In pity to "me, my son, and in honour of thy family; despise "the temptations of the tyrant, and defy his threats. "Look up with hope to that God who made the world, "and who can deliver thee from thy cruel persecutors. "Bravely imitate thy religious brethren, who have "suffered the worst of deaths for their conscience: " fear not the tortures this heathen can inflict; and be " assured that in the day of mercy, which this tyrant "shall never see, I shall receive you all in celestial " embraces."

The godly youth, having with great attention heard the admonition of his pious mother, on a sudden cried out, "Well then, unbind me, and let me apply myself "to the king and his friends that attend about the "throne." The company was overjoyed at this proposal, and immediately let him loose; upon which he ran hastily to the side of the cauldron, and thus addressed himself to the king: "Most impious tyrant! "Hast thou received from the hand of God a king-"dom, and so many worldly blessings, and yet with-" out the least shame or remorse murderest the friends "and servants of him who thus advanced thee? Is this "the requital thou makest to a bountiful God, to rack "and torture those that worship him, and for no other "reason but because they worship him as he himself "has directed? Be well assured this wickedness will "not be forgotten, nor go unrewarded, for justice will " pursue thee; and in the mean time lay up in store "for thee torments and fires, not like these, which "quickly consume the body, and put a period to pain, "but such as shall be a store of fire, and pains inex-"haustible. Canst thou call thyself a man, thou more "than savage brute, and yet have no regard, no re-"lenting for these most exquisite and studied pains,

"which thou inflictest on them who have the same na-" ture, the same tender sense of sufferings with thy-" self? Is it possible a creature of like matter and form " should take delight in mangling, burning, flaying, " scourging, killing his fellow creatures? Yet such "thou art; but unlike to us in disposition, and as un-" like in thy fate and portion. For we who die to gra-"tify thy malice have done our duty, and shall find " favour and happiness with God: but thou, who hast " put us upon the truth of our religion with so much " causeless pain, so undeserved a death, shalt howl " for ever in despair, and be plagued with the bitter re-" proaches of this sad day's transactions. So dreadful, so "infamous is thy case! so blessed, so glorious my mar-"tyred brethren! from whose honours and rewards think "not that either flattery or fear shall exclude me: for "know, I aspire to an equality with the best of them, and "think it long till we meet again in the same sufferings "here, and in the same bliss hereafter." With that he cast himself into the cauldron; and expired in the hottest of the fire.

This was the glorious end of these godly heroes, who waded through a sea of the acutest pains to the port of eternal rest. And yet to increase our wonder, and abate that notion of fortitude which men, too partial to themselves, are apt to boast of, as the peculiar glory of their sex, there is yet a more astonishing instance of it in the mother of these brave religious brethren. She was exercised by pains more sharp and complicated than any yet mentioned. Who can conceive the extremity, the variety of that pious mother's pains, who herself was tortured and put to death in every one of her seven sons? The affection of parents terminates in their children, who are the proper centre of all their care and concern: but so true a daughter of Abraham was the mother of these gallant godly youth, that even compassion for her own children could not break in upon her duty. Such was her zeal, that when religion and the present safety and preferment of her seven sons were offered to her choice, she wisely gave the preference to religion, took God's word before the king's, and chose to have them live for ever with God in heaven, rather than enjoy a short prosperity with Antiochus upon earth. The fear and love of God made her overlook the present ease and advantage of her children; and she knew she could never love them so tenderly, so deservedly, as when their steady virtue and constancy in the cause of truth charmed her affections, and endeared them to her. They were just, wise, temperate, and magnanimous, affectionate to each other, and dutiful to their mother to that degree, that they even died in the cause of their law in obedience to her. And she was so far from allowing any one of these manifold engagements to betray her into an undue tenderness, or suffering any of the torture they endured to shake her reason, that she exhorted each of them singly, and all of them together, not to decline any sufferings or death for the sake of religion.

And now, to close this bloody tragedy, the soldiers approached to seize the godly matron in order to execution; but she prevented all attempts upon her person, and without any force cast herself into the fire, defeating thus the tyrant's rage and violence, disappointing all his wicked contrivances, and exerting a most vigorous and noble faith. Thus ended this doleful, yet glorious day, with the death of the victorious Solomona, who triumphed in the sharpest agonies of her sons, and her own sufferings, who with them was translated from misery to bliss unspeakable, admitted into the joyful society of all their pious ancestors, and whose souls were received into an eternal rest, after sacrificing their bodies in the service of their

God.

The poor Jews for a time laboured under unspeakable oppression from the cruel Antiochus; but at last they were rescued by the divine providence, under the conduct of the noble family of the Maccabees: the chief of which at that time was Mattathias the priest,

who had fled from Jerusalem, during the persecution, and with his five sons, John, Simon, Judas, Eleazar, and Jonathan, had withdrawn to the mountains of Modin.

In this retirement, Mattathias and his sons bemoaned the hard fate of their religion and country. But they had not opportunity long to enjoy this sad retreat; for the tyrant's restless malice soon found them out, who sent his messengers to Modin to oblige the inhabitants to sacrifice and burn incense in honour of their idols. Many submitted to this force, but the brave Mattathias and his family abhorred this profaneness; and to let Apelles, king Antiochus's general, see, that in defence of his conscience, the honour of God, and the truth of his religion, he was not afraid to die, he bravely slew a Jew that was just going to sacrifice, preventing his idolatry by his death; and Apelles continuing to persuade or force the people to profaneness, received his death from some of the brave Maccabees, who not only in defence of their conscience killed their persecutors, but overturned their altars, and pulled down their idols.

Mattathias, however, perceiving that he could not long maintain his opposition to the superior power of the enemy, calling out to his countrymen, said, "Let him "that loves his religion follow me." Upon which he made the best of his way to the mountains, with his sons; whither several Jews, with their families, followed him. Antiochus's officers hearing this, took a party of the garrison at Jerusalem, and pursued them; and attacking them on the sabbath, slew about a thousand of them, who would not defend themselves because of the solemnity of the day. Hereupon Mattathias and the rest came to a resolution, not to make any scruple of defending themselves for the future against such as should attack them on After this they formed a body of reguthe sabbath. lar forces under the command of Mattathias, and fell upon their enemies as they found opportunity, destroyed the altars of their idols, and caused the children to be circumcised.

Mattathias having acted the part of a brave and prudent general, at last is forced to submit to the weight of a hundred and forty-six years; when taking leave of his sons and countrymen, he exhorted them, at his death, to defend their nation and religion, and declared his son Judas Maccabeus his successor in the command of the forces. Which command was accordingly conferred on him after his father's death, and he soon made it appear that he was worthy of it by his courage and conduct: for Apollonius, governor of Samaria, hearing how obstinately the Jews defended themselves against the king's forces, in haste gathered what troops he could, and prepared to attack them: but Judas was apprised of his approach, and marching against Apollonius, routed his army and slew him. das, the governor of Cælo-Syria, hearing of this defeat, and resolving to suppress the Jews before their successes should increase their numbers, advanced as far as Bethoron with a numerous army; but Judas, though inferior in number, defeated and pursued him, killing eight hundred of his men upon the spot; the rest fled into the country of the Philistines.

Upon this news, Antiochus was much enraged, and vowing a severe revenge, he raises a powerful army in Greece and other parts, resolved to invade Judea the next spring. But finding his treasure fall short of paying so vast an army, (his tribute being much diminished by the frequent revolts and commotions in his dominions) he intended an expedition into Persia, and there to levy tribute to defray the charge of the war. But before he went, he constituted his favourite Lysias, governor of all the country from Euphrates to Egypt, leaving with him one half of the forces, with orders to send an army into Judea, utterly to destroy Jerusalem, to extirpate the Jews, and settle strangers in the country. Antiochus having thus disposed affairs, marched to Persia; and Lysias, the better to execute his master's commands, chose Ptolemy the son of Dorymenes, Nicanor and Gorgias, three eminent commanders, to manage the war against the Jews. These

with an army of forty thousand foot, and seven thousand horse, prepared to invade Judea, and all things being ready they marched to Emmaus, where, for a short time, they encamped. During their stay there, their army was increased by the additional troops of the Syrians, renegado Jews, and other neighbouring nations, among whom came several merchants to buy slaves, thinking

themselves secure of victory over the Jews.

In the mean time, Judas was not idle; for he and his brethren gathering what forces they could in so short a time, resolved to defend themselves; and disposing their little army as regularly as the condition of their affairs would permit, Judas in a short speech thus ani. mated them: "There never was a fitter opportunity, "my friends, of exercising our valour, and despising "danger than now. Liberty, the darling principle of " nature, is the cause we are to fight for; without "which we must never expect to enjoy our religion. "This is the time to recover our ancient laws by our "courage, or pusillanimously deliver them up, and "these poor remains of our countrymen, to ignominy "and slavery. Trust in God, whose cause we fight, "and question not but he will bless our arms with "success here, or give us a glorious reward here-

Judas having thus encouraged his men, took post at Maspha, opposite to Jerusalem; where, hearing that Gorgias was detached with five thousand foot, and a thousand horse to surprise the Jewish camp by night, he marches with his best troops to fall upon the main body of the enemy at Emmaus. Gorgias coming to Judas's camp, found it empty, and concluding that the Jews had through fear fled into the mountains, pursued them thither. In the mean time, Judas came to Gorgias's camp by break of day, with only three thousand men; which the enemy seeing, they marched out to charge them; but Judas soon routed them, killed three thousand upon the spot, and pursued the rest into the country of Edom. Then, returning to attack the body which Gorgias had led into the mountains, they un-

derstanding that their main body had been defeated, their camp seized and burnt, and that Judas's army was in the plains ready to give them battle, a sudden panic seized them, and they all fled into the neighbouring countries. Judas's victorious army returning from the pursuit, entered the enemy's camp, which they plundered, carrying off a great booty: then giving thanks to God, the author of their success, they repaired to Jerusalem; where they enjoyed the fruits of their victory during the remaining part of that year. But Lysias, impatient at these disappointments, and anxious to wipe off the disgrace of this defeat, the next year raised an army of sixty thousand foot, and five thousand horse, and came in person to extirpate the Jews. Judas and his army being flushed with their former success, were not in the least discouraged at the sight of this numerous army, for drawing out ten thousand men only, they gave Lysias battle, whom they routed, and cut five thousand of his men in pieces. Lysias upon this defeat returned to Antioch to raise more forces, resolving to be revenged on the Jews with a more powerful army than hitherto he had raised.

· The enemy being thus driven out of Judea, Judas endeavoured to settle the affairs of his country. He first began by cleansing the temple, and restoring it to the same condition it was in before, causing it to be again dedicated, and the worship of God revived. He fortified mount Sion, inclosing it with walls and towers. Having put Jerusalem into this posture of defence, he fortified Bethsura, a city near Edom, and made war on the neighbouring nations, which had conspired to destroy the Israelites that were among them. After this, having divided the forces among his brethren, he routed the Ammonites and Edomites, entered the country of Gilead, took many towns, and rescued a great number of Jews, who were besieged in castles and towns, and convoyed them safely to their own country, with their wives and children. In their passage home they besieged and took by storm the city of Ephron, which they burnt, and put all the men to the sword. Then

passing the Jordan, they came into the plains of Judea, the people all the way singing hymns of victory, and offering sacrifices for the success of the army. And that which was most remarkable, in these several expeditions and engagements was, that when they came to muster the

Jews, there was not a man wanting.

While Judas and his brother Jonathan were thus successful, the other brother Simon was not idle in Galilee, whither Judas had ordered him with part of the army; for he defeated the enemies of the Jews there, and brought away all the Jews that were in those parts. But Joseph, whom Judas had left to govern Jerusalem, in his absence, venturing out with too small a party to attack Jamnia, Gorgias, who was governor of the place, sallied out and repulsed them, putting two thousand to the sword; the rest being obliged to retreat to the frontiers.

Things going on in Judea so unsuccessfully under Antiochus's generals, he meets with little better success in Persia; for marching to the city of Elymais, or Persepolis, to plunder it, the inhabitants having notice of his design, prepared to give him a warm reception; which they did with such resolution, that they routed his forces, and obliged him to return to Babylon. After this, being at Echatane, he received the news of the ill success of his arms in Judea, which threw him into great perplexity; however, being resolute in his revenge for that disgrace, he hasted forward; but, by the way, falling from his chariot, his whole body was bruised, and his limbs crushed with the fall. This accident (or rather judgment upon him for his former cruelties) together with his vexation for the late disappointments, occasioned a corruption in his body in such a manner, that he swarmed with worms, his flesh rotted off, and his trunk was one entire mass of putrefaction. And now he repented, but too late, of the many barbarities he had practised against the Jews. Being at the point of death, he declared his son Antiochus Eupator his successor, and appointed his foster-brother and favourite, Philip, regent of the kingdom, who conveyed the dead body of the wicked Antiochus to Antioch.

The Jews reaped little advantage by the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, for his son and successor Antiochus Eupator continued the war. He sent his general Timotheus with a considerable army to take possession of Judea; which Judas hearing, he immediately marched out of Jerusalem, and gave him battle, in which he slew twenty thousand five hundred of his foot, and six hundred horse, Timotheus himself hardly escaping into the fortress of Gazara, where his brother Chæreas commanded. Judas pursued him thither, besieged the place, and in five days took it. Timotheus having hid himself in a ditch, was dragged thence and slain with his brothers Chæreas and Apollophanes. Lysias hearing how unsuccessfully affairs went on in Judea, gathered an army of above eighty thousand, with which he marched to Jerusalem: but coming to Bethsura, he thought it necessary to take that place in his way. Whilst he was attacking Bethsura, Judas having notice of his approach, marched out of Jerusalem, and with his usual bravery fell upon Lysias's army, killed eleven thousand foot, sixteen hundred horse, and routed the rest. Lysias with much difficulty escaped to Antioch; where, considering the distracted condition of affairs, and despairing of present resources, he was obliged to grant the Jews peace, and the liberty of their religion.

This peace was but of short continuance; for the neighbouring people gave the Jews great and frequent disturbances; particularly the people of Joppa, who drowned two hundred of them; for which Judas soon took a severe revenge; for he burnt their port, and put to the sword all the inhabitants who had escaped the fire. Then, hearing that the people of Jamnia had very basely treated the Jews that lived among them, he came and burnt their harbour, and all the ships in it. After this, learning that Timotheus had collected some troops together, he marched against him; but on his way was attacked by a party of five thousand Arabian foot and five hundred horse, whom he defeated, and afterwards con-

cluded a peace with them. Then taking the strong town of Casphim, he attacked Characa, where Timotheus had left ten thousand men in garrison, and put them all to the sword. In fine he routed Timotheus, took him prisoner, and dismissed him, upon condition that he should release the Jews he had taken prisoners. After which, he slew twenty-five thousand men at Carnion, retook Ephron, and defeated Gorgias, who, himself, narrowly

escaped.

But notwithstanding these successes, the Jews could not call themselves entirely masters of Jerusalem, for the citadei still held out for the king of Syria; and the garrison, consisting of Macedonians and renegado Jews, was very troublesome to such as resorted to the temple. Therefore Judas thought it highly necessary to attempt the reduction of the place; and having prepared his engines and machines for besieging the citadel, he soon straitened the garrison. The besieged found means to acquaint king Antiochus with their distress, who promised to relieve them; and for that end gathered an army of a hundred and ten thousand foot, twenty thousand horse, and thirty elephants with castles on their backs, full of archers. Menelaus, whom we have mentioned before, and whom Antiochus had appointed highpriest, pretended to entreat the king for his people; but his prayers only tended to procure to himself the supreme authority. Lysias, who plainly saw through this hypocrite, cautioned the king against these villainous designs and practices of Menelaus, assuring him that Menelaus was the occasion of all those troubles: upon which the king caused him to be seized, and cast down headlong from the top of a tower.

Antiochus, preparing to march to the relief of the citadel of Jerusalem, passed through Idumea, where, in his way, he laid siege to Bethsura, a strong town, which not long before held out against his general Lysias. Antiochus with great fury attacks the place, which made a good defence, for the inhabitants by their bold sallies burnt and disordered his engines, so that he spent much time about it to no purpose. At last, Judas, who had

pressed the citadel with all his might, fearing the Bethsurans would be forced to submit to the superior force of the enemy, left the siege of the citadel, and came to the relief of Bethsura. Intending, if he could, to surprise the king's forces, he marched in the night, and attacking one quarter of the army in the dark, he killed four thousand, and struck a terror into the whole camp. The next morning, notwithstanding their numbers, and the terrible appearance of the elephants, Judas gave them battle, in which Eleazar, the brother of Judas, performed an act of astonishing bravery; for seeing an elephant larger than the rest with the royal arms, and thinking the king had been upon him; he rushed into the thickest of the enemies, killing all that stood in his way, and getting under the belly of the elephant, he thrust his sword into his body; the beast fell, and he himself was crushed to death with the fall. But how resolute and brave soever the Jews were, they were so overpowered by the unequal numbers of the king's troops, that they were obliged to retire to Jerusalem. Whereupon, Antiochus dividing his army, with one part carried on the siege of Bethsura, and with the other himself marched to Jerusalem.

The Bethsurans seeing no prospect of relief from their friends, surrendered the town upon terms, and no acts of hostility were offered to them. From Bethsura the king's forces marched to Jerusalem; where Judas had shut up himself and friends in the temple. They defended the place with great resolution, but must inevitably have surrendered, or been taken by storm, or for want of provision, if a fortunate circumstance had not relieved them; which was this. While king Antiochus and Lysias were busy in reducing the Jews, Philip, whom the old king had constituted Regent during the young king's minority, returning from Media and Persia with an army, usurped the government of the kingdom. Whereupon, Lysias advised the king to grant the Jews peace, and permit them to be governed by their own laws, that he might with more safety look after his own affairs. This proposal pleased the king, who immediately sent to offer

peace to the Jews, who readily accepted of it; which being ratified by oath, they came out of the temple. But when Antiochus had entered the temple, and saw the strength of the wall that encompassed it, he, contrary to his oath, caused the walls and fortifications to be demolished. Then deposing Onias, he made Alcimus Highpriest in his room, and took Onias along with him to Antioch, whither he hastened, and found Philip had made himself master of the city; but giving him battle he recovered it.

Antiochus Eupator did not sit long on the throne; for Demetrius Philopater, the son of Seleucus, going from Rome to Syria by sea with forces, seized the port of Tripolis; and having possessed himself of a great part of the kingdom, he entered Antioch; where the army secured Antiochus and Lysias, with intent to deliver them up to Demetrius: but he refusing to see them, they were put death by the soldiers, and Demetrius took possession of

the whole kingdom.

Alcimus, whom Antiochus Eupator had created Highpriest, and who had voluntarily defiled himself at the time when the Jews mixed with the Gentiles, and was thereby become unworthy of the priesthood, of which he had been deprived, to insinuate himself into the favour of Demetrius, accused Judas the Maccabee, and his party, of carrying on the war, of exciting sedition, of being enemies to the kings of Syria, and of persecuting his faithful servants. Then advising Demetrius to send some person to Judea to enquire into the posture of affairs, Demetrius gave that commission to Bacchides, a favourite of Antiochus Epiphanes, a very powerful man, and prætor of Mesopotamia; and recommending Alcimus to him, he gave him power to treat Judas and his followers as he pleased. Then confirming Alcimus in the priesthood, he and Bacchides at the head of an armed force came to Judea. The doctors of the law, meeting together to consult what to do on this occasion, at last agreed to wait on Bacchides and Alcimus to offer peace. Being promised safe conduct, they accordingly attended; but the treacherous Alcimus having got them in his power,

caused sixty-two of them to be seized and put to death in one day, contrary to his word given them. This perfidy incensed the people, and made them more cautious. However Bacchides, who had the power in his hands, put Alcimus into possession of the country, and left troops to support him. Alcimus being master of Judea, made a great slaughter of the Jews that were not for him. das openly declared against Alcimus, and stood upon his defence; and Alcimus being sensible that his party was not the most powerful, thought it most expedient to return to the king to strengthen his interest by additional forces; and being arrived at court, he charged Judas and his followers with many crimes: which accusation being heard in prejudice of Judas and his friends, Demetrius sent Nicanor, one of the prime men of his court, with orders to seize the Jewish general, to destroy all his party,

and to set up Alcimus.

Nicanor coming to Jerusalem, and pretending he came in a friendly manner to let them know the good inclinations of the king to the Jews, they were so credulous as to believe him, and received him and his army with great hospitality. But Judas, who was as politic as he was brave, soon found out Nicanor's design against his person; and therefore retiring to his friends, resolved to defend himself by open force. Near Capharsalam there happened a skirmish, in which Judas being overpowered by numbers, was forced to retreat into the citadel of Jerusalem, having lost five thousand men in the action. Nicanor pursued him, and went up to mount Sion, where some of the priests met him, shewing him the sacrifices, which, they told him, they were going to offer for the safety of king Demetrius. Nicanor in a rage threatened them, that if they would not deliver Judas to him, he would raze the temple to the ground. But being disappointed of his aim in taking Judas, he was resolved to be revenged on some body; and therefore having been informed, that there was a man named Razias, eminent for his steady constancy in the religion of his country, he sent a guard of five hundred men, to seize him; for he thought the loss of so considerable a person would be a

great affliction to the Jews. This company attacked the good old man in the castle, which he defended bravely; but at last being overpowered, and finding himself just ready to fall into the enemy's hands, rather than be a reproach to his nation by submitting to these infidels, he

thrust his sword into his own body and died.

Nicanor leaving Jerusalem in a rage, and breathing nothing but revenge against the Jews, encamped at a village called Betheron, where he was joined by several recruits from Syria. Judas was not long behind him; for he drew out of Jerusalem, and with his little army encamped at Adasus, within thirty furlongs of the enemy. Though Judas's army scarcely deserved that name, (for it consisted but of one thousand men, and Nicanor's of nine thousand) yet he was resolved to give them battle, trusting more to the merits of his cause, than numbers of men. Then in a short harangue, at the head of his troops. he encouraged them not to be dismayed at the inequality of their numbers, but to consider the cause they fought for; and falling on, a bloody fight ensued; in which Nicanor, the enemy's general, was killed, and his whole army cut off, not one man escaping. Judas's victorious troops proclaimed their success to the country by sound of trumpet wherever they came, which was welcome news to the Jews. When they searched the field, they found the body of Nicanor, which carrying to Jerusalem, Judas ordered the head to be hung upon the top of the citadel, first cutting out the tongue for the blasphemy it had uttered, which was thrown over the wall to the fowls: after which they instituted a festival in memory of this victory on the thirteenth of the month Adar, or August.

About this time died Alcimus the high-priest, who, attempting to demolish the old wall which encompassed the priest's apartment, was struck with a painful distemper,

of which he miserably died.

After this the Jews remained absolute masters of Jerusalem, had peace for some time, and concluded an alliance with the Romans; but soon after Demetrius sent Bacchides against them, with an army of choice troops.

Bacchides marched by the way that leads to Galgala, took that city, and slew abundance of people; after which they advanced to Jerusalem. Bacchides hearing that Judas was encamped at Berezoth, sent a detachment of two and twenty thousand foot, and two thousand horse, to

surprise him.

Judas, notwithstanding his troops were but a handful in comparison of the enemy, still retained his zeal and courage, and animates his men to behave themselves as usual under such disadvantages; but they were so alarmed at the numbers of the enemy, that many of them deserted, till at last he had but eight hundred men left. However with these he resolved to try his fortune; and when his soldiers advised him to retreat and wait for a supply, he with disdain answered them: "God forbid "that the sun should ever see me turn my back to my "enemies; for I will never stain the glory of our former "actions gained by so much valour, with an ignominious "flight." Then animating them by his own example, he charged and broke the right wing, where Bacchides in person commanded, and pursued them to the mountains of Azotus; but having not forces enough to keep the left wing in play, that followed and enclosed him. The action was very hot and obstinate on the side of the Jews, who sold their lives at a dear rate. At last Judas, wholly encompassed and overpowered by the enemy, was killed; and his men thus deprived of their heroick leader were forced to fly. Simon and Jonathan having obtained a truce of Bacchides, conveyed the body of their brother Judas to the city of Modin, where they buried it in their father's sepulchre, with all the funeral honours due to the memory of so brave a man, and so excellent a commander.

The Syrian general, by the assistance of Judas's enemies, soon made himself master of the country, and disposed of the government into the hands of such only as were enemies to Judas's friends, who were used with greater barbarity than was ever practised since the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity. In this miserable condition of affairs, those Jews who persevered

in their integrity, chose Jonathan, brother to Judas, their general: which when Bacchides understood, he attempted by fair means to get him into his power; but Jonathan and his brother Simon having timely notice of it, withdrew with their friends out of his reach, into the desart of Thecue, and coming to the lake Asphar, they made a stand there. Bacchides soon after followed them with all his army; and Jonathan hearing of his approach, sent his brother John to convey the baggage into the country of the Nabutheans, who were their friends: but on their march they were attacked by the people of Madabab, who slew John and his party, and carried off their baggage. For which some time after Jonathan was revenged of them; for surprising them as they were making merry at a wedding, he slew many of them, and obliged the rest to fly to the mountains. After which, Jonathan and his party returned to the river Jordan, whither Bacchides pursued them, and coming up with them on the sabbath, supposing they would not violate the religion of the day, he expected to make an easy conquest. But Jonathan encouraged his men to dispute it bravely, by shewing them the danger; for the enemy was in the front, and the river in the rear, so that they could hope for no safety by flight. Then praying to God for success they engaged; and Jonathan seeing Bacchides very active in encouraging his men, charged him with all his might; but Bacchides declining, sheltered himself among his soldiers. Jonathan . finding the enemy's numbers too great, and being no longer able to resist them, with his friends threw themselves into the water, and swam the Jordan, the enemy not daring to pursue them. Upon which, Bacchides returned to the citadel of Jerusalem with the loss of nearly two thousand of his men.

Bacchides having retired to the capital, fortified the neighbouring towns, and put garrisons into them; and taking hostages for the fidelity of the inhabitants, he returned to the king, and the country enjoyed peace for two years. During which time Jonathan and his party lived quietly; but at the end of two years his enemies

prevailed with Bacchides to return: of which, when Jonathan had notice, he slew the advisers of it, and withdrew with his brother Simon and his followers to Bethalaga, a town situated near the desart, where he fortified himself. Bacchides pursues and besieges him for some time; but Jonathan, making a sally in the night, occasioned a great slaughter among the followers of Bacchides: his brother Simon, with his party, attacking them in another quarter, burnt their engines of war, and put many to the sword. This defeat so exasperated Bacchides, that he vented his malice on the renegado Jews who were the occasion of his return and disgrace. This last defeat inclined Bacchides, however, to an accommodation; and therefore finding Jonathan and his party would never suffer him to be quiet, and that it would be a tedious and difficult work to reduce them, a treaty was proposed, and Bacchides took an oath no more to molest the Jews. In pursuance of this treaty, he restored to Jonathan the prisoners of Judea, and never more returned into the country.

The war being thus happily terminated in Judea, Jonathan lived very quietly at Machma, where he governed the people in peace, and administered justice as supreme, having a watchful eye over the deserters from the religion of his country. His power was soon enlarged by an unexpected accident between two rival princes: for Alexander, a son of Antiochus Epiphanes, coming into Syria, by the treachery of the garrison, who hated the haughty temper of Demetrius, delivered up Ptolemais. Demetrius hearing that Alexander had possessed himself of Ptolemais, prepared to recover it; in order to which, he thought it necessary to court Jonathan, who he thought at this time might prove a dangerous enemy; and therefore concluded an alliance with him, for fear he should join with Alexander; and, to engage him the more in his interest, he gave him full power to raise forces, to provide arms, and ordered the hostages which were in the

citadel to be delivered up to him.

Upon the offer of these conditions, Jonathan came to Jernsalem, and read his orders, which when the garrison

and renegadoes heard, they immediately obeyed, and delivered up the hostages. After which, Jonathan purged the garrisons of Bethsura and Jerusalem; the latter of which he fortified, building the walls of square stone, the better to defend it against the insults of an enemy. Besides, this, Demetrius made the Jews more advantageous offers than at other times they could have expected: but Jonathan and the Jews, who had suffered so much by the fickle and cruel temper of Demetrius, did not believe him sincere, but looked upon this generosity as an act of force and necessity; and therefore they joined Alexander, who, to encourage Jonathan and his party to strengthen his interest, promised to make Jonathan High-priest. Demetrius too late perceived his error in his former cruelty to the Jews, who, though he promised them all imaginable privileges and immunities, with the restoration of their religion, and whatever else they could desire, still inclined to Alexander, who, partly with mercenary troops, and partly with those that revolted in Syria, marched to meet Demetrius, whom he soon defeated and

Alexander, being thus possessed of Syria by the death of Demetrius, wrote to Ptolemy, king of Egypt, and demanded his daughter Cleopatra in marriage. Ptolemy readily consented, and appointing Ptolemais for the place of consummation, brought his daughter thither, giving her a royal portion. Jonathan the High-priest was invited to the wedding by Alexander, who received him with great honour, and appointed him, next to himself, prince and chief of Judea.

Alexander did not long enjoy this prosperous state; for Demetrius, the son of the late Demetrius, resolving to avenge his father's death, and recover his kingdom, came from Crete into Syria with an army of mercenaries. He soon gained over to his interest Apollonius Davus, the governor of Cœlo-Syria, who entered Judea to oblige Jonathan to desert Alexander's party, and unite with Demetrius. Apollonius, with his army, came to Jamnia, and sent a challenge to Jonathan to leave the fastnesses in the mountains, and combat with him in the

plains. Jonathan was so irritated by this proposal, that he collected ten thousand men, and taking his brother Simon with him, marched directly to Joppa, which was garrisoned by the forces of Apollonius. Jonathan presently shut up the place; but the people, fearing they should be taken by storm, opened their gates to him. Apollonius hearing of the surrender of Joppa, resolved to put a stop to the progress of the Jewish general; and taking three thousand foot, marched to Joppa; then making a feint, as if he would retreat, with a design to draw Jonathan into the plain, he planted an ambuscade at the same time in the hollow parts of the country, consisting of a thousand horse, by which he intended to encompass Jonathan. Jonathan was apprised of this stratagem, and being resolved to be no longer braved by the enemy, formed his army as advantageously as the time would admit; gave the command of part of the army to his brother Simon, and encouraging his soldiers to behave themselves like men, he cautioned them to forbear encountering the enemy at first, but to receive their arrows with their shields, till the enemy had spent them, and then to charge them. Apollonius's horse, in whom he chiefly confided, began a distant fight, discharging continual flights of arrows from morning till noon, without any execution. Simon perceiving the enemy weary with shooting, and their arrows spent, with his party attacked and routed them, whilst Jonathan fell on their main body, which soon gave way. The whole army of Apollonius thus broken, fled over the plain to Azotus, whither the Jews pursued them, and entered the town with them. In this city was a famous temple of the idol Dagon, into which the Syrians fled; but Jonathan setting fire to it, burnt them and the temple. The number of them that were slain in the action, and burnt in the temple of Dagon, amounted to eight thousand.

After this, Jonathan burnt and destroyed all the neighbouring towns about Azotus; and marching to Ascalon, with design to besiege it, the inhabitants not daring to provoke the victorious Jews, came out with every token of friendship, offering an alliance and considerable presents to the general, who commending them for their good-will, returned in triumph to Jerusalem, laden with the spoils of the enemy. Alexander hearing of the defeat of his general Apollonius, the better to mask his hypoerisy, sent messengers to Jonathan to congratulate his good success against Apollonius, who, he assured him, had acted without any commission in the late affair from him, at the same time making Jonathan, his friend and ally (as he called him) a present of Jewels of considerable value.

About this time, Ptolemy Philometer, with a very great force, naval and land, arrived in Syria, under pretence of assisting his son-in-law Alexander. In his march, all the towns as far as Azotus, submitted and received him by Alexander's order; but when he came to Azotus, the people made a great complaint against Jonathan and his soldiers, who had burnt the temple of Dagon, and overrun the country with fire and sword. Ptolemy gave them a patient hearing, but promised nothing, being unwilling to disoblige Jonathan, who hearing of the arrival of Ptolemy, went out to meet him, and was honourably and magnificently received by him; then accompanying him in his way as far as the river Eleutherus, he took his leave of him, and returned to Jerusalem.

As Ptolemy was on his way to Ptolemais, he narrowly escaped an ambuscade laid for him by Ammonius at the instigation of Alexander. Which being discovered, Ptolemy wrote to Alexander, and demanded justice on the traitor; but Alexander declining it, Ptolemy plainly perceived Alexander was the author of the plot, for which he conceived an implacable hatred against him, and which soon terminated in his ruin: for the people, grown weary of Alexander at Antioch, Ptolemy was courted to accept the government of Asia, which he modestly declining, advised them to accept of Demetrius, whom they accordingly received, Ptolemy bestowing his daughter, whom he had before married to Alexander, on Demetrius. Alexander enraged at this, marched from Ci-VOL. II.

licia, with a great army, invaded Syria and the country of Antioch with fire and sword. But Ptolemy, with his new son-in-law Demetrius, met and gave him battle, wherein Alexander was worsted, and forced to fly to Arabia, where Zabelus, king of the country, cut off his head, and sent it to Ptolemy for a present. Ptolemy survived his son-in-law but a short time; for he died of the wounds he received in the last action, five days after, and Demetrius remained in peaceable possession of his

father's kingdom.

During these transactions, Jonathan had laid siege to the citadel of Jerusalem, and some of the garrison escaping by night, came and acquainted Demetrius with it, who thereupon marched from Antioch with an army to relieve it; and coming to Ptolemais, he sent for Jonathan to appear before him there. However, Jonathan continued the siege, but went attended with the elders and priests to Ptolemais, carrying a large present of gold, silver, and other valuable things, with which he made his peace with Demetrius, who treated him very honourably, confirming him in the priesthood, and bestowing on him the government of Judea, Samaria, Joppa, and Galilee, with other neighbouring towns, on condition that

he should pay three hundred talents.

Affairs being thus settled, and Demetrius suspecting no further danger from any enemies, first reduces the soldiers' pay, and soon after disbanded most of them, retaining only those foreigners who accompanied him from Crete. This procured him the hatred of the army, who from other kings, though in the most profound peace, received their full pay: this opportunity one Tryphon, a commander under Alexander, artfully seized; and which he the more easily improved by the assistance of Malchus the Arabian, who had young Antiochus, the son of the late king Alexander, under his care. Tryphon with much difficulty prevails with Malchus to deliver the young prince to him, whom, according to his promise, he proclaimed king. Jonathan embraced this opportunity to ask leave of Demetrius to expel those who were in the citadel of Jerusalem, and the other fortresses of Judea,

concluding, that Demetrius, to keep him in his interest, would refuse him nothing. Demetrius granted his request; but on condition that he should send him succours. Jonathan sent three thousand men to Antioch, who did Demetrius great service; for the Antiochians taking arms, the Jews behaved themselves so well, and defended Demetrius, that he owed his life to them on this occasion. But this Demetrius soon forgot; for he broke his promise with Jonathan, and threatened him with military execution, if he did not pay the tribute usually given by his predecessors. This he had certainly done, had he not been prevented by Tryphon, against whom he was forced to march with the army he had prepared to chastise Jonathan. Tryphon returning from Arabia with young Antiochus, set the diadem on his head; upon which the Syrian troops, who had been deprived of pay by Demetrius, revolted to Antiochus, who in one battle recovered the city of Antioch. Then Antiochus sending letters to Jonathan, complimented him with the title of friend and ally; confirmed him in the priesthood, and the four governments, which had been formerly granted to him, with many other privileges. Besides, he appointed Simon, Jonathan's brother, governor of the coast from the city of Tyre to the frontiers of Egypt. Jonathan, not a little pleased with these proceedings, sent messengers back to Antiochus and Tryphon, assuring them of his friendship, and that he would readily join them against Demetrius as the common enemy.

Jonathan soon taught Antiochus how useful his interest was to any prince that confederated with him; for having obtained leave of Antiochus, he went through Syria and Phænicia enlisting soldiers. When he came to Ascalon, the people met him with great presents; whom he invited, as he had done the other cities of Cælo-Syria, to relinquish Demetrius, and join Antiochus. From thence he went to Gaza, where, contrary to his expectation, they shut their gates against him, declaring for Demetrius. Upon this Jonathan laid siege to the place, which, the more easily to oblige to yield, with a detach-

ment he ravaged the neighbouring towns with fre and sword. The people of Gaza seeing the present calamity, and, by reason of the distance, despairing of immediate relief from Demetrius, submitted to Jonathan; who taking hostages from them for the performance of the conditions, sent them to Jerusalem; and marching forward, he reduced the country as far as Damascus. At this time Simon took the city of Bethsura. Demetrius hoping to put a stop to the growing greatness of Jonathan, sent an army into Judea, which Jonathan engaged: those that fled at first, facing about, routed the enemy, and returned victorious to Jerusalem. Then he renewed the alliance with the Romans and Lacedemonians; \* and being informed that Demetrius's generals were returned against him with a greater army than the former, he met him in the country of the Amathites; but the enemy in a great consternation retired by night, and Jonathan made excursions into the country of the Arabs; after which his brother Simon possessed himself of Joppa, while Jonathan repaired the wall of Jerusalem, and built a fortress.

Tryphon, who had no other aim than his own interest, in getting young Antiochus into his hands, having long waited for an opportunity, found it impracticable to put his wicked designs in execution till now. For Demetrius being very much weakened in Syria, and his affairs, by a late defeat in Parthia, going on very ill in other parts, Tryphon thinks this the fortunate moment to declare himself; but he again considered, that so long as Jonathan continued in the young king's interest, it would be to no purpose to declare himself. Wherefore

Lacedemonians. Much doubt has arisen among the learned respecting the time when this alliance was made. Several difficulties occur in the course of the narration as recorded, I Macc. ch. xii. v. 10. The Areus king of Lacedemon there referred to, lived in the time of Onias the first High-priest of that name. The Spartan sovereign, most likely from some old or fabulous tradition, states, that the Jews and Lacedemonians were brethren, and had both descended from the stock of Abraham.

Tryphon repaired to Bethsan, (which the Greeks call Scythopolis) where Jonathan met him with an army of forty thousand men. Tryphon, finding him so well prepared, saw there was no attacking him by force, and therefore made use of this stratagem: he told him, that now Demetrius was reduced to so low a condition, he was no longer able to give them any trouble, and there was no occasion for keeping up an army; advising him to dismiss his, and reserving only three thousand men, to send two of them to Galilee, and keeping the other thousand with him, to go and take possession of Ptolemais, which he would deliver up to him, and invest him with the sole command. Jonathan suspecting no treachery, did as Tryphon advised, and attended only with a thousand men, accompanied him to Ptolemais; where they no sooner entered, but the garrison shut the gates upon them, seized Jonathan, and put his men to the sword. Tryphon having thus treacherously overreached Jonathan, dispatched a party of foot and horse into Galilee, to put to the sword all that were of Jonathan's party; not doubting of an easy conquest, now they were without a general. But he soon found himself mistaken; for Simon, Jonathan's brother, was soon invested with that command, and prepared to receive them. Upon this, Tryphon marched with his army into Judea, taking Jonathan with him, and sent to Simon for his brother's two sons, under pretence of releasing Jonathan. Simon readily consented, and, to incline the traitor the more, sent a hundred talents with them. But Tryphon no sooner had them in his power, than he put them and their father to death; after which he returned into his country, where he murdered king Antiochus, and possessed himself of the kingdom. Simon having recovered his brother's body, erected a stately monument of marble at Modin, wherein he inclosed the bones of his father and brethren.

The affairs of Judea began now to put on a more peaceful aspect than they had hitherto done; for Simon having concluded an alliance with Demetrius, entirely delivered his nation from the yoke of the Gentiles; for

in the first year of his pontificate and command, he took off the tribute, which the people had hitherto paid to the Maccdonians; and, to perpetuate the memory of these noble acts of Simon, it was decreed, that all private instruments and public records should bear date from such a year of Simon's pontificate and reign. After this, he took the cities of Gaza, Joppa, and Jamnia, recovered all the strong-holds, and had the citadel of Jerusalem surrendered upon terms. wisely considering how much the city of Jerusalem had been infested by the citadel, he levelled it with the ground, that it might no longer be a retreat for sedition and faction. And to prevent its being rebuilt, he levelled the hill on which it was situated, so that now no eminence appeared but that of the temple only.

Simon having settled the affairs of his country in this happy condition, Antiochus, the brother of Demetrius, being restored to the throne of Syria, confirmed Simon in the sovereignty over all Judea; and he in return sent him a re-inforcement of men to make war upon the usurper Tryphon, who shut himself up in Dora; but finding he was not likely to hold that place long, he fled to Apamia, where he met with worse fortune, for the town being taken by storm, he

was slain.

Antiochus, who was naturally covetous, and forgetful of the benefits he had received, broke the treaty of alliance he had made with Simon, requiring him to restore Joppa, Gazara, and other places, or else to pay him a thousand talents of silver. Simon refused these conditions; upon which Antiochus sent an army under the command of his friend Cendebeus, to reduce Judea. Simon, though far advanced in years, with a juvenile courage prepared to give them a warm reception; and sending his sons before with a good body of troops, took a compass with the main body of the army, planting ambuscades in all the passes of the country. Things thus regularly disposed, answered his expectation; for as soon as Judas and Hircanus, Simon's sons, appeared,

Cendebeus's army fled, and the Jews pursuing them, cut

off a great number.

After his defeat, Simon renewed his alliance with the Romans, and continued in peace. But in the eighth year of his reign, he was barbarously murdered by the treachery of his son-in-law Ptolemy, whom he had appointed governor of the plains of Jericho. This man; who was rich and ambitious, aspiring to make himself master of the country, laid hold of the opportunity, when Simon and his sons, Mattathias and Judas, were visiting the cities, and having invited them to an entertainment in a fort which he had built, he treacherously caused them to be murdered: and intending to make sure work at the same time, he sent men to Gazara to kill John Hircanus, Simon's third son, and attempted to gain the army and city of Jerusalem by corruption: but Hircanus having received the news of the murder of his father and brothers, was prepared to receive his intended murderers, and upon their arrival at Gazara had them dispatched, and succeeded his father

Simon in the pontificate and general command.

In the first year of his reign, Antiochus Sidetes (who is also called Soter, or the Saviour) king of Syria, invaded Judea with a powerful army; and ravaging the country, forced Hircanus into Jerusalem, where he closely besieged him. Antiochus used all the force and stratagem he was master of to reduce the place, which he could not have done, if the besieged had not wanted provisions, which obliged Hircanus to treat with him, who granted the Jews the liberty of living according to their own laws and religion, on condition they should lay down their arms, and restore the tribute of Joppa, and all the cities without Judea, and pay him besides five hundred talents; three hundred down, and hostages for the payment of the other two. This treaty being concluded, Antiochus entered Jerusalem, where Hircanus received him with much pomp and splendor, and afterwards sent some troops with him to the Parthian war; where Antiochus being overcome and slain by Arsaces, king of Parthia, his brother Demetrius, who

had been long a prisoner in Parthia, being set at liberty,

was advanced to the throne of Syria.

The Jews, who by Antiochus were become tributaries to the kings of Syria, did not long continue so; for upon the death of Antiochus, Hircanus not only shook off the Syrian yoke, but carried the war into that country, the cities and towns of which he knew must be very much unprovided of garrisons, by the great draughts of men the kings of Syria had made for their foreign expeditions. Nor was he mistaken in his conjecture, for he with ease subdued the cities of Methaba; Samga, Sichem, and Gerizim, and destroyed the temple of the Samaritans, which Sanballat, by the permission of Alexander the great, had built in favour of his son-inlaw, Manasseh. He likewise took Ador and Marissa, cities of Idumea, and obliged the people to be circumcised or leave the country: which rather than do, they not only submitted to be circumcised, but received all the other Jewish rites. After this, he renewed the alliance with the Romans, with much greater advantages than before. He opened David's tomb, took from thence three thousand talents, and was the first native governor of the Jews that entertained foreigners in his pay. In fine, he governed the Jews in peace nine and twenty years, and left the High-priesthood and sovereignty to his son Judas Aristobulus, who was the first that took upon him, in a formal manner, the title of king,\* by

<sup>\*</sup> King. Aristobulus, son of John Hircanus, grandson of Simon, and great grandson of Mattathias, the zealous assertor of thelaw of God against the tyrant and oppressor Antiochus, was the first of the family of the Asmoneans or Maccabees who took upon him the title of king. The name Maccabees was derived from the heroic Judas, eldest son of Mattathias, he having assumed for his motto on the Jewish standards the Hebrew sentence, Exod. ch. xv. 11, THE CAMO-KA BAELIM JEHOVAH? "Who is like unto thee among the gods, O, Jehovah?" An abbreviation of the initial letters of these Hebrew v. ords made up the word Maccabi, and all who from that time fought under their standards were called Maccabees, though in later times it had become appropriated to the royal family only

putting a diadem on his head. He was a prince of a bloody disposition, for he imprisoned his brethren, except Antigonus, for whom he seemed to have a peculiar esteem and affection, and associated him in the throne. Having a jealousy that his mother was a secret rival of his power, he confined her to prison, where she was famished. At last he began to cool in his affection to his beloved brother and favourite Antigonus, which was aggravated very much by an unfortunate occasion; for Antigonus, returning in triumph from the wars, at a time when the people were celebrating the feast of tabernacles, his brother Aristobulus being then sick, he went into the temple splendidly dressed, and well attended, to sacrifice for his success, and the good health of the king his brother. Some, who wished to promote a misunderstanding between the brothers, from hence took occasion to acquaint the king with Antigonus's cavalcade in the most aggravating circumstances, urging, that he did not appear in the condition of a private man, but like one that affected a crown. Though Aristobulus did not at first believe these stories, yet, considering the possibility of them, to avoid suspicion, and consult his own safety, he commanded his guards to conceal themselves in an obscure corner. and if his brother passed by without arms, to let him go quietly; but if he came armed, then to kill him; sending word privately at the same time to his brother, not to come armed into his presence. On the other hand, the queen, who had done all the ill offices she could in creating and fomenting jealousies between the brothers, persuaded the messenger which Aristobulus sent to Antigonus, to tell him, that the king had a mind to see him armed. Antigonus suspecting no mischief, was coming armed to the king, but at Straton's tower he was murdered. This, and the other unnatural murders of his mother and brethren, so affected his conscience, that he died of grief, having reigned only one year. He added Iturea to his dominions, and compelled the people to submit to circumcision, and other Jewish rites.

Aristobulus being dead, his wife Salome put the sceptre into the hands of his eldest brother, Alexander Jannæas. This prince had been passed by in the succession, not on account of any fault or defect in him, but because his father loved his other two brothers better. Being on the throne, he began to cast a watchful eve about him; and finding one of his brothers endeavouring to dethrone him, he dispatched him out of the way; but permitted the other, who was contented with a private life, to live quietly, and enjoy his favour. He marched with an army to reduce Ptolemais, and having driven the enemy within their walls, he laid close siege to the place. This city and Gaza, besides the tower of Straton, and the fortress of Dora, which Zoilus possessed, were the only places on the coast, that were not under his dominion. They therefore, considering that if Ptolemais, were reduced, themselves should not be able long to oppose him, sent to Ptolemy Lathyrus, the banished king of Egypt, then at Cyprus, to come and help them, assuring him, that upon his arrival, Zoilus, the people of Gaza, Ptolemais, and Sidon would join him. Ptolemy puffed up with great expectation from these promises, prepared for Syria, against the opinion of his friends, who dissuaded him from this expedition, by urging, that his enemies, particularly his mother Cleopatra, would take all advantages against him, and perhaps take Cyprus from him. But he was deaf to their arguments, and hastened to Svria; where, notwithstanding on his way he heard of the taking Ptolemais, he continued his march with an army of thirty thousand foot and horse. Encamping near Ptolemais, he sent messengers to the town, who were not admitted, nor could he obtain any answer from thence. This gave him great perplexity; but Zoilus and the Gazeans joining him, they began to ravage the country.

Alexander returning home, began to contrive how to gain his point by policy, which he could not effect by force. First, he privately invited Cleopatra to his interest, at the same time openly professing himself a friend to Ptolemy, whom he called his friend and confederate, and promised him four hundred talents of silver, if he would deliver up Zoilus, and add his dominion to that of the Jews. Ptolemy, like an easy prince, swallowed the bait, and seizes Zoilus; but finding himself imposed on by Alexander, and discovering the intrigue between him and his mother Cleopatra, he broke off from him, and marched with his army to besiege Ptolemais. The place holding out against him, he blocked it up; and with part of his army ravaged the country. Upon this, Alexander with an army of fifty (some say eighty) thousand men, marched to oppose him; but before he could come near him, Ptolemy taking the advantage of the sabbath, surprised Azochim, a town of Galilee, and carried off ten thousand prisoners, besides much plunder. Then going on to meet Alexander, the two armies engaged near the river Jordan, where Alexander's army was routed, and thirty thousand slain on the spot. Ptolemy made no other use of this victory, but to shew his cruelty, which he expressed in that barbarous instance of massacring the women and children; and causing their flesh to be boiled in cauldrons, to make the Jews believe that his army lived on human flesh. This he did to strike the greater terror into his enemies.

His mother Cleopatra thought it now time to check her son's growing greatness; setting out therefore from Egypt with a powerful land and naval force, she landed in Phænicia, was well received by the inhabitants, and laid siege to Ptolemais. In the mean time Ptolemy believing it would be easy for him to recover Egypt in the absence of his mother and her army, left Syria to repair thither; but not succeeding, he was obliged to pass the winter at Gaza.

Cleopatra having taken Ptolemais, Alexander Jannæus met her there with great presents, and was honourably received by her, as a distressed prince that fled to her for refuge. Alexander being thus in Cleopatra's power, it was debated, whether it would not be more expedient to seize his dominions, than to permit

so dangerous and wealthy a neighbour to enjoy them. The generous Ananias, commander of Cleopatra's forces, opposed this inhospitable proposal, declaring it a scandalous and dishonourable act, to abuse a prince and kinsman of the queen, who fled to her for protection. In fine, Cleopatra generously concluded an alliance with Alexander; after which, he took Gaza and other places; but forgetting his own late distress, he used the inhabitants with great cruelty, generally putting them to the sword. His cruelty likewise extended to his own countrymen, who during his absence had occasioned great mutinies; these he put to death, to the number of fifty thousand; which so exasperated the rest that they called in Demetrius Euceres, king of Damascus, to their assistance, who cut in pieces all Alexander's soldiers that were strangers.

Alexander thus deprived of his mercenaries, was obliged to fly to the mountains, where six thousand Jews, pitying his misfortune, joined him. With this reinforcement he retrieved his affairs, subdued the rebels, and returned to Jerusalem; where he glutted his revengeful eyes with the most horrid scene of cruelty that ever was acted by man: for regaling himself at a banquet in a very elevated part of the palace, where there was an open prospect every way, he ordered eight hundred men that had been his enemies to be fixed to crosses, and their wives and children to be massacred before their faces. This abominable cruelty procured him the name of Alex-The rest of the rebels, to the number ander Thracides.\* of eight thousand, fearing the same fate, by night withdrew from Jerusalem, and during Alexander's reign lived

in exile.

The civil wars being thus concluded, Alexander attacked his neighbours, took several towns, and very much enlarged his dominions. Then returning from

<sup>\*</sup> Thracides. In allusion to the Thracians, a Tartar nation inhabiting the countries about Cimmerian Bosphorous, and considered in those early ages as the most barbarous of mankind.

Prideaux.

this expedition, which took up about three years, he was well received by his people; but enjoyed not that felicity long, for falling sick of a debauch, he laboured under a quartan ague three years; which, however, did not much obstruct his military undertakings. At last, quite exhausted, he was forced to submit to fate at the siege of Ragaba, on the other side the Jordan. A little before his death, he ordered his wife Alexandra, whom he left regent, to conceal his death for some time from the army, that it might not hinder the siege; and that when she had taken the place, she should return in triumph to Jerusalem. The chief thing he advised her to do when there, was to court the pharisees, a very powerful sect among the Jews, and who could by their interest advance or depress whom they pleased. Then advising her to summon the chief of the people, and bid her shew them his dead body, and offer it to them to do what they pleased with it, either out of honour or revenge; and to assure them she would do nothing in the administration without their advice and consent.

Alexandra, after the reduction of Ragaba, returned to-Jerusalem, and punctually observed the directions of her dying husband, which succeeded to her wish; for all pitied the widowed queen, and deplored the loss of their king, whose funeral they honoured with more than usual

pomp and solemnity.

Alexander left behind him two sons, Hircanus and Aristobulus; but his wife Alexandra procured to have herself declared queen, made Hircanus High-priest, and left Aristobulus to lead a private life. The name of the government was indeed invested in the queen regent, but the administration was entirely in the power of the pharisees, who lorded it with great insolence over those against whom they had any malice, till at last they began to draw blood, which roused the active genius of Aristobulus, who being supported by several persons of condition and figure among the Jews, complained publicly of the abuses of government, and threatened to call the pharisees to account. But notwithstanding these clamours, the queen persisted in her confidence of the phar

risees, putting into their hands all the places of strength in her dominions, except the strong castles of Hircania, Alexandrion, and Macheruns, where she had secured her

greatest treasure.

About this time, news was brought, that Tigranes, king of Armenia, had invaded Syria with an army of five hundred thousand men, and that he would soon be in Judea. This information exceedingly alarmed the queen and all the Jews; therefore they immediately dispatched ambassadors with presents of great value to court his friendship, and divert him from his design of attacking them. They found Tigranes laving close siege to Ptolemais, where he received them kindly, commended their forwardness in applying to him, and assured them of his good inclinations. Ptolemais being taken, Tigranes was informed, that Lucullus, the Roman general, in his pursuit of Mithridates, had entered into Armenia, putting the country under military execution. Upon this, Tigranes was obliged to return to defend his own country, which relieved the Jews from their painful apprehensions of an invasion from that quarter.

Toward the end of this queen's reign, Aristobulus, took the advantage of her sickness, and of the insufficiency of his brother Hircanus to govern, seized several strong holds, and prepared to have himself declared king after her death; which soon happened, in the ninth year of her reign, and the seventy-third of her age. Alexandra being dead, Aristobulus declared war against his brother Hircanus, and in the plains of Jericho they prepared to engage; when Hircanus's soldiers revolting to Aristobulus, Hircanus betook himself to a castle for safety. Upon this they came to a treaty, and it was agreed that Aristobulus should be king, and Hircanus be suffered to live quietly in the enjoyment of his own private fortune. This treaty was confirmed by public sanction and mutual embraces between the two brothers, in a great concourse of people in

the temple.

Though Hircanus was of a quiet disposition, and affected a retired life; yet there were not wanting those of a more turbulent spirit to rouse his slothful genius, with

hopes of recovering his right. Amongst these, Antipater\* was the most forward; he was naturally very factious, and an enemy to Aristobulus; and being governor of Idumea, was very powerful and wealthy, by which means he had Arabs, Gazeans, and Ascolonites always at his devotion. He persuaded Hircanus to go to Arctas, king of Arabia, and desire succours of him; which he obtained, upon promise, that Hircanus should restore to him the towns which Alexander his father had taken. This was agreed to, and Hircanus, returning with those auxiliaries, was soon reinforced by the Jews, who came to join him. Aristobulus seeing himself overmatched, durst not venture a battle, but retired to Jerusalem; whither Hircanus followed and besieged him: but Scaurus, Pompey's lieutenant in Syria, being gained to the interest of Aristobulus, commanded king Aretas to draw off, on pain of being declared an enemy to the people of Rome. The king durst not disobey, but raised the siege; which Aristobulus perceiving, fell upon his rear in the retreat, and cut off about seven thousand of his

Not long after, Pompey came into Syria, and took up his residence at Damascus, where he was attended by ambassadors from Syria, Egypt and Judea, all laden with presents of prodigious value. Nor were Hircanus and Aristobulus wanting on their part, each of them sending his deputy: Antipater appearing for the first, and Nicodemus for the latter. Pompey gave them a patient hearing, who deelared against the government of kings, it being the native custom and right of the Jews to be un-

<sup>\*</sup> Antipater. This is the first mention we have in history of Antipater, father of Herod the Great, and the rest of that family who reigned kings of Judah until the final destruction of the Jewish state and monarchy by the Romans. The Jews who hated his son Herod represented Antipater as having been an Idumean slave, but Josephus who had good opportunities of knowing the truth, asserts, that he was of a noble family, and of the Jewish religion by profession. Herod's flatterers derived the descent of his ancestors from a branch of the house of David.

der no other administration, but that of the priests of their God. Hircanus complained of the injustice done him, who being the elder brother, was deprived of the prerogative and primogeniture by Aristobulus: who had confined him to a scanty portion, below the dignity of his birth, his brother having usurped the rest; adding besides, that he was a dangerous enemy to the neighbouring nations, whom he frequently infested with incursions and plunderings, entertaining pirates in his service at sea, and if care was not taken, might in time cause a revolt of the nation. All these articles were attested by a thousand Jews whom Antipater had for that purpose prepared. Aristobulus, in defence of himself, urged, that his brother was dismissed from the government for his unfitness to reign, by which he became so contemptible among the people, that himself was obliged to take the administration upon him, to preserve the right in their family. This he attested by a number of loose and debauched persons. Pompey having heard both sides, referred the determination of the controversy till his coming into Judea, ordering them in the mean time to live

Aristobulus, perceiving that Pompey did not approve of his violent proceedings, hastened back to Judea, and shut himself up in the strong fortress of Alexandrion: at which Pompey was so offended, that taking the army which he intended against the Nabatheans, and some auxiliary troops of Syria, he marched against Aristobulus. Pompey sent a summons to Aristobulus to appear before him; which he reluctantly did, but was persuaded by his friends to take care how he made the Romans his enemies. Upon his submission, he was received, and Pompey placed a guard over him; but sending Gabinius to Jerusalem to receive the money which Aristobulus promised, the Jews of Aristobulus's faction shut the gates against him, though their chief was in Pompey's custody. This obstinacy so offended Pompey, that doubling the guard over Aristobulus, he went in person to Jerusalem; where there was a great division among the inhabitants, who were very irresolute what measures to take; some

being of opinion to deliver up the city to Pompey: but Aristobulus's faction were for shutting him out, and preparing for war, because he kept their chief prisoner. This party prevailed, and seized the temple, cutting down the bridge that led to the city. The rest admitted Pompey's army, and delivered up the city to him; upon which he

prepared to besiege the temple.

The faction made an obstinate defence for three months, at the end of which the Romans entered the temple. During the siege, and the taking the temple, twelve thousand Jews were slain. Pompey entered the temple with several persons, who saw the inner part of the sanctuary, which was forbidden by the law to all but the priests. Pompey was so charmed with the beauty and sanctity of the place, that he offered no profane violence to the table, candlestick, vessels, or sacred treasure, which were valued at about two thousand talents. The next day he ordered the temple to be cleansed, and offered sacrifice. Then he restored the High priesthood and sovereignty to Hircanus, but forbade him to take upon him the title of king. After this, he made the Jews tributary to Rome, taking from them all their conquests, and putting them under proper governors, he left the government of Syria to Scaurus, and carried away with him to Rome, Aristobulus, with his two sons and two daughters. Alexander, one of the sons, found means to escape by the way; the other, called Antigonus, was carried to Rome, with his father and sisters. Thus the dissention\* between the two brothers, Hircanus and Aristobulus, was the cause of the Jews' loss of sovereignty and liberty, which the Romans never before of themselves attempted: and besides the loss of the towns they had conquered in Syria, the Romans in a short time exacted from them above ten thousand talents.

<sup>\*</sup> Dissention. The unnatural dissention in the Asmonean family, joined to the degraded state of religion among the Jews, and the violent disputes between the Pharisees and Sadducees first made way for the interference of the Romans; the elevation of the Herodian family; and finally, for the downfall of the nation.

Alexander, who had made his escape from Pompey, after three years returned into Judea, gathered forces, and possessed himself of several places; but Gabinius, who succeeded Scaurus in the government of Syria, coming into Judea, pursued him. Upon which, Alexander retreating towards Jerusalem in hopes of some succours from thence, Gabinius engaged him, and slew about thirty thousand of his men, taking as many prisoners. Alexander thus routed, fled into the castle of Alexandrion, whither Gabinius pursued and besieged him; who seeing no hopes of succour, surrendered, together with the other strong fortresses, Hircania and Macheruns; all which Gabinius demolished. Gabinius returns to Jerusalem, takes Hircanus with him, and committed the care of the temple to him, confirming him likewise in the priesthood; but for the civil government, he put it into the hands of magistrates of his own choosing; and having divided the province into five parts, he appointed a court of justice over each of them.

By this time Aristobulus had been five years a prisoner at Rome; from whence, with his son Antigonus, he made his escape, and returned into Judea; where, raising forces, he would have fortified the castle of Alexandrion, but Gabinius prevented him. Afterwards he attempted the same at Macheruns, pretending to cover them with eight thousand men; but the Romans following them, at the first charge broke and routed them, and killed above five thousand. Aristobulus, with about a thousand men, threw himself into Macheruns, which he fortified as well as the time and his condition would permit; but could not hold out above two days; for being very much wounded in the last storming of the place, he, with his son Antigonus, was taken prisoner, and both of them were sent prisoners again to Rome; where, by order of the senate, the father was kept in prison, and his children sent back

to Judea.

Alexander made some efforts towards recovering the sovereignty, and collected an army of thirty thousand Jews, with which he attacked Gabinius, but was routed: so that Hircanus, who was still continued in the High

priesthood, had only the title of prince, without the authority, the Romans being sovereigns, and Antipater having the greatest share in the government. And now Judea, thus become a prey to the avarice of the Roman governors, every general, whose commission led him that way, plundered the poor Jews of what he could grasp. Among these, the insatiable M. Crassus marching against the Parthians, came into Judea, and extorted two thousand talents; which Eleazar, who was treasurer of the temple, seeing, to preserve the sacred ornaments from his rapacious claws, made him a present of a golden obelisk, that weighed three hundred pounds, obliging him upon oath, not to remove any thing else from thence. But Crassus violating his oath, took all the gold he could find. After his death, Cassius fell upon Judea, took Tarichea, and carried away near thirty thousand Jews.

The Roman affairs falling into distraction by the differences between Cæsar and Pompey, Cæsar setting Aristobulus at liberty, sent him with two legions into Judea, to combat with one of Pompey's there; but Pompey's faction procured him to be poisoned. His body was by the order of Cæsar preserved, till M. Antony caused it to be carried to Judea, where it was honourably interred in the royal sepulchre. Soon after, Scipio, by order from Pompey, caused his son Alexander's head to be struck off at Antioch, for his former rebellion against

the Romans.

Cæsar returning victorious from Egypt, made some stay in Syria, where Antigonus, Aristobulus's second son, met him, and complained of the hard fate of his father and brother, charging Hircanus and Antipater with having possessed themselves of the government by force. But Antipater so well pleaded his own cause, that Cæsar, instead of restoring Antigonus, continued Hircanus High-priest, and gave Antipater the government of Judea.

When Cæsar was gone, Antipater, by his prudence, appeased all the troubles in Judea. This Antipater had two sons, Phasael and Herod; to the first he gave the government of the country about Jerusalem, and to the

second that of Galilee. Phasael behaved himself in his administration with great lenity; but Herod's boisterous and tyrannical carriage made him very odious to the Jews. Antipater their father being willing to keep fair with the Romans, that he might the longer continue in his government of Judea, made Hircanus a very useful instrument in the support of his power; for taking advantage of his easiness, he persuaded him to disburse the public treasure to the Roman generals. But this growing greatness of Antipater and his sons soon became offensive o the Jews; the chief of whom openly complained to Hircanus of several acts of a violent and exhorbitant nature committed by them, particularly of the cruelty of Herod to Ezekiah and his companions, whom Herod had caused to be slain, for making an incursion into Syria; threatening Hircanus at the same time, if he did not do justice upon Herod. Antipater hearing this, advised his son Herod to appear at Jerusalem to make his defence, but cautioned him to come with a good guard. But that which was Herod's greatest security, was the friendship of Sextus Cæsar the president of Syria, who wrote to Hircanus to be tender of Herod, and threatened him if he did otherwise. Herod accordingly appeared guarded before Hircanus, which so terrified his accusers, that none of them durst make good their charge. But Sameas, one of the council, a man of great justice and integrity, with much assurance and presence of mind complained, that he never saw a criminal appear in a court of justice so attended; who came more like an invader, than one to take a trial for the breach of justice. "But, he observed, "this is not so much to be imputed to his insolence, as "to your connivance, which encourages it. Yet, know, "continued Sameas, that this person whom you screen "from the justice of the laws, will one day be a scourge "to you all." Nor was he a false prophet in this; for when Herod obtained the kingdom, he was revenged on them, particularly on those that were his judges.

Herod being thus dismissed, Hircanus privately advised him to make the best of his way to Syria, assuring him, that the council was resolved the next day to con-

demn him. Herod took the hint, and fled to Damascus, where disposing his affairs in the most secure posture he could, he declared to Sextus Cæsar, that he would not appear before the council if he were summoned again. Herod having thus escaped, the council bitterly exclaimed against the remissness of Hircanus, charged him with partiality, and assured him that the consequence of this neglect would fall heavy upon him one day. Hircanus had reason to believe them, but being of an easy disposition, he did not much regard them.

Whilst Herod was in Syria, he, by bribes, prevailed with Sextus Cæsar to confer upon him the government of Cælo-Syria; which having obtained, he raised an army, and prepared to march against Jerusalem, to take revenge upon his judges and those who had accused him; but Antipater and Phasael meeting him, endeavoured to dissuade him, urging how ungrateful it would be to Hircanus, who had screened him from justice, and advised his escape. Upon their persuasions, Herod for the present

dropped his resentment.

So long as Julius Cæsar lived, the Jews were held in great honour and esteem by the Romans, who made many decrees in their favour: but after his death, the Roman commonwealth falling into great dissentions, and civil war raging among the contending parties, Cassius, having made himself master of Syria, exacted above seven hundred talents of silver of the Jews, with which Antipater caused his sons to furnish him, and by those means kept himself in the government of Judea. lichus was a great instrument in this, though an enemy to Antipater; of which Cassius was so sensible, that he would have dispatched him, had not Hircanus, by Antipater, sent a hundred talents to pacify him. Instead of acknowledging this favour, the ungrateful traitor Malichus, after the departure of Cassius, made it his business to betray Antipater, thinking by his death to secure the government of Judea to Hireanus, whom he influenced as he pleased. But Antipater having knowledge of this treachery, passed the Jordan, and collected a party of natives and Arabians to defend himself; which Malichus perceiving,

and aware that his treason was known, he confidently repaired to Antipater, and declared his innocence, urging how impracticable it could be for him to have any design upon Antipater, whilst his son Phasael was governor of the country about Jerusalem, and Herod at the head of an army. By these fair speeches Antipater was deluded into a reconciliation; which Antipater still improved, to engage the traitor Malichus to his interest: for Marcus, the president of Syria, understanding that Malichus was privately designing alterations and divisions in Judea, would have put him to death, but for Antipater, who interceded for him. This credulity cost Antipater dear; for Cassius and Marcus not only confirmed Herod in the government of Cælo-Syria, with a great addition of land and naval force, but promised him the kingdom of Judea, when the war between them and Antony was over. Malichus from hence dreading Antipater's greatness, which by the promotion of his son would be very much advanced, resolved to take him off; therefore corrupting Hircanus's butler, he caused him to be poisoned at an entertainment in Hircanus's palace. Phasael and Herod had for some time suspected Malichus's designs on their father; but when they heard of his death, they concluded Malichus was the author of it; Herod was for revenging it immediately; but Phasael, for fear of a civil war, thought it more expedient to suppress their resentment, till a convenient opportunity presented; and therefore accepting Malichus's satisfaction, he appeared to be reconciled.

In the mean time, the affairs of Samaria, which had been in great disorder, being composed by Herod, he prepared, with a great guard to go to the feast at Jerusalem. Malichus, who was conscious to himself of the evils he had committed, and dreading Herod's impetuous and revengeful spirit, persuaded Hircanus not to suffer Herod to enter the city in that manner; which Hircanus did, sending to Herod not to profane the holy ceremonies with his soldiers. But Herod despising this admonition, entered the city by night, which excited no small terror in the mind of Malichus. However, betaking himself to his old

arts of dissimulation, he came to Herod, and with tears in his eyes deplored the death of his dear friend Antipater, as he called him: though at the same time he had provided himself with a strong guard. Herod finding he could not fairly come at him then, by advice of his friends concealed his revenge, and treated Malichus with civility; but having by letters signified to Cassius the death of his father, and his suspicion that Malichus was the cause of it; Cassius, who had long entertained a secret grudge against Malichus, gave leave to Herod to revenge it as he thought proper, and issued orders to the officers to stand by Herod. Malichus, who knew he could be safe no where within the reach of Herod, intended to go to Tyre, where his son was kept as an hostage. This city held out for Cassius against Antony, and Malichus thought, if he could possess himself of it, the government would of course fall to his share. But before he could put this project in practice, Herod pursued him, and caused him to be stabbed on the sea shore.

Cassius having left Syria, a tumult arose in Judea, occasioned by a revolt of some Jews at Jerusalem, who, being headed by one whose name was Felix, attacked Phasael. Herod, who was then at Damascus with Fabius the governor, impatiently prepared to succour his brother, but was prevented by a fit of sickness. However, Phasael so well defended himself, that he drove Felix and his party into a tower, where he made them compound for their liberty and lives. This disturbance was owing to the connivance and neglect of Hircanus, for which Phasael reproached him with ingratitude, in favouring his enemies against him, who had heaped so many benefits on him. At this time the brother of Malichus was possessed of several fortified places, particularly of the strong castle of Massada: but as soon as Herod recovered his health, he dispossessed him of them.

Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus, was not idle all this time; for having gained Fabius to his interest by a bribe, with the assistance of his father-in-law and his friends, he collected an army, and attempted to possess himself of Judea. But Herod marched against him, routed and ex-

pelled him. Upon which Herod returned in triumph to Jerusalem, where he was magnificently received by Hircanus and the people; but especially by Hircanus, whose grand-daughter, Mariamne, he had married; though he had before married Dore, by whom he had his eldest son

Antipater.

After the defeat of Cassius at Philippi, by Mark Antony and Octavius Cæsar, Antony marching into Asia, arrived in Bithynia, where he received the deputies of all those nations that had been of Cassius's faction. Amongst these were those of the Jews, who complained to Antony of Phasael and Herod, that Hircanus indeed had the name of sovereign, but that those two brothers had assumed the power. But the Jews were mistaken in their hopes of redress from Mark Antony, whom Herod had previously, by great presents, so engaged in his interest, that he would not so much as admit the Jews to confront Herod. But when Antony came to Ephesus, he readily entertained ambassadors from Hircanus, who sent him a crown of gold, and intreated him to give liberty to the Jews, whom Cassius had made slaves; which request he granted.

Those Jews who were enemies to Herod, did not desist upon Antony's first refusal to hear them, but sent a hundred of the most considerable among them to him at Daphne, near Antioch; but to no purpose, for Hircanus supported the two brothers: and this impeachment, instead of doing harm, proved advantageous to them; for after Antony had heard all that they alledged, he constituted Phasael and Herod Tetrarchs, and gave them the government of Judea. This he confirmed by letters to the Jews: and to oblige them to obey him, he detained fifteen of the hundred as hostages, whom he had put to death, but for Herod's intercession. However, the Jews continued their importunity, and in most pressing instances, which they sent by a thousand of their best men, begged relief; but Antony was deaf to their complaints, and resolved to support Herod, sending a peremptory order to the magistrates to assist. Herod in the recovery of his government. Herod repaired to Jerusalem, and

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meeting several of the Jews without the city, advised them to receive him, expostulating with them on the danger of disobeying him, and provoking the Roman general. But they, despising both his advice and threats, fell upon him and his attendants, killing some and wounding others. Antony hearing of these commotions, was so enraged, that he ordered the fifteen hostages to be put to death, and threatened a severe revenge against the rest.

Herod's hopes, which were thus blasted in his attempt to recover the government, seemed to be utterly extinguished by another unfortunate affair. Antigonus, upon his defeat by Herod, fled to Parthia, where he was kindly received and protected: and after he had established an interest among the most considerable of that country, he promised them a thousand talents, and five hundred of the finest women, if they would invest him with the government of Judea. The Parthians closed with him, and the king sent his son Pacorus, and his general Barzapharnes with a powerful army to invade Judea. Dividing the army, Pacorus marched along the coast, and Barzapharnes through the inland country. Pacorus coming to Tyre, they refused him entrance; but those of Sidon and Ptolemais admitted him. Pacorus having Antigonus with him, the Jews that dwelt about mount Carmel joined them, as did many others in their march, so that their army was greatly increased by the time they came to Jerusalem; where the faction that hated Phasael and Herod declared for Antigonus. Herod made some faint efforts to keep the city, but was soon obliged to fly. The Parthians entering Jerusalem seized Hircanus and Phasael, and put them in irons. And now, Herod, considering himself in a country of enemies, and perceiving no hopes of safety but by a speedy flight, made the best of his way to Rome, taking his mother with him. In their hasty march, the chariot, in which his mother rode, was overset, and she in great danger of being killed. Herod, affrighted, partly at the danger in which he saw his mother, and partly at the approach of a pursuing enemy, would have stabbed himself; but his friends interposing, begged

of him to have regard to his own life, for the sake both of his mother and of themselves, who must unavoidably fall into the enemy's hands, if he destroyed himself. Herod, at their persuasion, resumed his reason, and applying what remedies the time would permit to his mother, comforted his friends, and continued his flight to the castle of Massada. The number of those who accompanied him in his flight was about nine thousand; so that though he was frequently attacked in his march, he came off victorious.

When he came to Ressa, a town of Idumea, his brother Joseph met him; where consulting what course to take, and considering that the castle of Massada, whither they intended to fly, was not capable of receiving so great a force as was with them, they concluded it would be most expedient to separate. Accordingly, furnishing them with provisions, they parted in small bodies. Then disposing of the women (who were eight hundred in all) and the best of their baggage in the castle of Massada, where there was plenty of water and provisions, Herod with his party marched to Arabia.

Antigonus being thus possessed of Judea, was very much concerned at the escape of the women, whom he intended to have delivered to the Parthians, with the money he had promised them: but that which gave him the greatest uneasiness, was his fear, that the Parthians would restore Hircanus; to prevent which, he caused Hircanus's ears to be cut off, to render him incapable of the High-priesthood. Phasael, no longer able to support himself in his dishonourable circumstances, put an end to his life and sufferings by a voluntary death; for being in chains, he had not the liberty of his hands to dispatch himself; and therefore having no other opportunity, he beat out his brains against the stone wall. As for Hircanus, he continued prisoner with the Parthians.

Herod having arrived on the borders of Arabia, and not in the least doubting of succour from Malchus the king of that country, whom he had formerly very much obliged, sent to him to acquaint him with his condition, request-

ing a supply of men and money; offering his brother Phasael's son (for he had not as yet heard of Phasael's death) for an hostage, till he paid him. Malchus fearing to disoblige the Parthians, who were near neighbours to him, dispatched messengers to Herod to forbid him entering his dominions. Herod was very much perplexed at this treatment, but could not help himself; therefore going thence he went to Egypt, where he was kindly received and entertained by Cleopatra. Afterwards, with much difficulty and danger in passing the seas, he landed at Brundusium in Italy, from whence he went directly to Rome; where he acquainted Antony with all that had happened in Judea, and with what difficulty he had made his escape from thence. Antony was touched with Herod's misfortunes; and considering the uncertainty of worldly affairs, which from the happiest condition are often reduced to the most miserable; and regarding the former friendship with his father, and the usefulness of Herod's active spirit, (at the same time not forgetting the many presents he made him to procure his favour) not only vigorously prosecuted his cause, but engaged Octavius Cæsar in his interest; who, partly for his father Antipater's sake, and partly to oblige Antony, who he knew was fond of Herod, resolved to forward his affairs as much as possible. These calling a senate, spoke largely in behalf of Herod, setting out his services to the Roman commonwealth in all emergencies; insomuch that the senate declared Herod king, and Antigonus an enemy to the people of Rome, for having accepted the government of Judea from the Parthians.

Whilst things went on thus successfully on Herod's behalf at Rome, his family, who were blocked up in the castle of Massada under the care of Joseph, Herod's brother, were hardly pressed by Antiogaus; for being in great want of water, they were just upon the point of surrendering, Joseph intending with about two hundred of his nearest relations and friends to escape to Malchus king of Arabia, who had repented of his late neglect and unkindness to Herod. But Providence prevented that design; for a great shower of rain falling by night, all

their cisterns were filled with water, and they had no occasion for flight. The besieged upon this took courage; and the place being naturally strong, and well fortified by art, they seized the most favourable opportunities of falling on Antigonus's soldiers, sometimes by open sallies, and at other times by surprize, so that they cut off many of them.

In the mean time Ventidius, Antony's lieutenant, being by order of the senate sent to expel the Parthians from Syria, having accomplished that business, entered Judea, under pretence of succouring Joseph; but his real design was to extort money from Antigonus; after which he left Judea.

Herod returning from Italy to Ptolemais, soon collected together a considerable army, consisting of foreigners, as well as Jews; and to convince Herod that Antony was in earnest, Gellius was sent with orders to Ventidius and Silo, who commanded a party in Judea, to assist Herod in the recovery of his kingdom. As for Ventidius, though he was sent to drive the Parthians out of Syria, and to reduce the country to their obedience to Rome, he afterwards employed his forces in plundering; and Judea being Silo's province, by frequent bribes he inclined to favour Antigonus. But neither of them daring to disobey these orders of Antony, they joined Herod; by which means Herod once more saw himself in a condition of taking a plenary revenge on all his enemies. Most of the Galileans joined him in his march: and Joppa lying between him and Massada, where his relations were shut up, he thought it expedient to take in that place, lest the enemy should from thence attack him. He soon made himself master of it, set his friends at liberty that were in Massada, and taking the castle of Ressa, marched directly to Jerusalem; where he encamped on the west side of the city. Antigonus had provided the place with all warlike munition, and a good garrison, which with darts and stones from the walls, and flying parties, frequently making excursions, very much infested Herod's army. Herod, hoping to make easy work of it, sent a herald about the walls to proclaim indemnity to all that

would submit. Antigonus, from the wall directing his speech to Silo and the Romans, argued the injustice they did him in transferring the crown from him, who was of royal descent, to a plebeian and half-Jew, as Herod was; adding, that if they were so offended with him for receiving the kingdom from the Parthians, that they would remove him; yet there were many of the royal race left who had no way offended the Romans. After these reproaches on both sides, they came to acts of hostility, and Antigonus's men behaved themselves so bravely, that they

soon drove the enemy from the walls.

Silo having been corrupted by Antigonus, secretly afforded him every assistance in his power, particularly in employing some of his own creatures, in whom he could confide, to demand more commodious quarters, and better pay, and complain that they wanted forage and provisions, which Antigonus had destroyed in all the neighbouring country. This irritated Herod, who, fearing that the Romans would desert him, told Silo, he ought to consider, that he was not only sent by Cæsar and Antony, but by the whole senate; and to remove any cause of complaint among the soldiers, he would take immediate care, that they should be plentifully supplied with all things necessary. Antigonus had notice of all that passed, and with flying parties and ambuscades often intercepted and cut off the convoys that were designed for Herod's army and the Romans: but Herod, who was as active and diligent as his enemy, very often came up with them, and pursued his advantages so closely, that at last, with much difficulty, he recovered all Galilee from Antigonus. After which he cleared the country of thieves, who in great bodies plundered the towns and the people.

During these transactions, the siege of Jerusalem proceeded but slowly; and that which retarded it the more was, Ventidius had sent for Silo to come to assist him to drive the Parthians out of Syria. But after Ventidius, in a pitched battle, had fought and routed the Parthians, and killed their general Pacorus, he sent Machera with auxiliary troops to Herod; who proved more an enemy than a friend, taking all advantages against the Jews, whether

friends or foes. Herod so deeply resented this, that he threatened to complain to Antony; but Machera appeased him, and they were reconciled. However, Herod seeing his affairs move very slowly, and the Roman generals very cool in his interest, resolved to repair to Antony, leaving his brother Joseph to observe Antigonus. Taking a good party with him, he by swift marches came to Antioch, where he met with a reinforcement; with which he cleared the country, as he went, of a wretched banditti, who were very troublesome to passengers. Antony was at that time besieging the city Samosata, upon the river Euphrates; but hearing that Herod was coming with a reinforcement, and that he had destroyed the barbarous people in his march, he drew out the army to receive him. Upon his approach Antony went out to meet him, saluted and embraced him, and shewed him all the marks of friendship and esteem. Antony having ended the war in those parts, constituted Sosius governor of the province, leaving the army with him; and commending Herod and his affairs to him, he went for Egypt. Sosius sent Herod back to Judea with two legions, and himself followed with the rest of his army.

In the mean time Joseph, in the absence of his brother, forgetting his instructions, with a detachment marched towards Jericho to procure forage; but the party he had with him, consisting of raw unexperienced men, were easily circumvented by Antigonus's veteran troops, who were well acquainted with all the avenues and passes of the country, and easily defeated Joseph and his people. Antigonus hearing of this defeat, ordered Joseph's head to be cut off, setting the price of fifty talents for the redemption of it. Upon this the Galileans revolted, and Herod's friends were worsted in every part of Galilee. Whilst he was in Daphne, he received the information of his brother's defeat and death, of which, it is said, he had some hints in a dream a little before: whereupon he hastened to mount Libanon, and there taking eight hundred of the natives of the place, and one Roman legion, he proceeded to Ptolemais; from whence marching by night he passed through Galilee,

subduing all that came in his way, and forcing the rest into strong holds; who upon Antony's approach, took the opportunity of the night, and made their escape from thence.

Whilst Herod was at Jericho, a party of six thousand of the enemy came resolutely down the hills, and put the Romans into great consternation, beating back the van-guard, and pursuing them home to their camp; where they so warmly engaged them, that Herod himself was wounded in the side. This success flushed Antigonus; who, being impatient of disputing it in little parties, sent an officer of his, named Pappus, to Samaria for men, that he might face the enemy in the field. But Herod meeting Pappus, routed and pursued him to Jericho, where the action was renewed; for the town being full of men, they made an obstinate defence, so that this seemed the most bloody part of the war, dead bodies lying in heaps on the ground. In the heat of this action a most violent storm fell, which prevented Herod's party gaining a complete victory; otherwise, had they marched to Jerusalem, thay had at once put an end to the war: for Antigonus's chief force being broken at the action of Jericho, he himself began to despair of further safety in the city, and had thoughts of quitting it.

By this time Herod had spent above two years in the recovery of Judea, since he was declared king of it at Rome. Considering therefore, that as long as Jerusalem held out, his possession of other places would be very precarious, (for Antigonus's party either by surprise, or superior force, often dispossessed him) he resolved to bend his whole force against the capital, and by reducing that put an end to the war. In order to which, and in imitation of Pompey, he came and encamped before the temple, which he encompassed with a triple trench. His own army consisted of about thirty thousand; to which Sosius brought eleven legions of foot, and sixty thousand horse, besides the auxiliary troops of Syria. Antigonus had a strong and numerous garrison, and was resolved to hold out to the last extremity. Herod, consi-

dering that the siege would be long and doubtful, unless he could cut off their provisions, which they found means to convey into the city by stealth, so disposed his troops, that he shut up all avenues to it. Then having prepared his engines for battery, he weakened the walls in many places. The besieged made a vigorous defence, and by frequent excursions burnt the engines, and ruined the works; wherever Herod had made a mine, the Jews in the city countermined, which occasioned many subterranean engagements. The Jews were at last very much streightened for provisions; but, animated by despair, they resolved to give the enemy as much troubleas possible. At last being no longer able to resist, Herod entered the city, the Jews obstinately retiring into the inner temple; but were pursued thither. All things were in the utmost confusion, death and slaughter raging every where, without distinction of age or sex. Romans, exasperated at the obstinate defence of the place, spared none within their reach; and Herod's party resolving to extirpate the faction, put them all to the sword wherever they found them. Antigonus, seeing all lost, thought it best to submit, but not to Herod; for observing from a tower where Sosius the Roman general was, he descended, and threw himself at his feet. Sosius ungenerously insulted over the wretched Antigonus, calling him woman, and then put him under a strong guard.

Herod being entirely possessed of the place, his next care was to preserve it from plunder. But he found it a difficult matter to restrain his men, especially the mercenaries, who were for seizing all they laid their hands upon. But at last, partly by intreaty and threats, and partly by force, he quieted them, and the city and temple escaped plundering. Then Sosius, having rewarded his officers and soldiers, left Jerusalem to Herod, and took Antigonus bound along with him to Antony. But Herod, feared that if Antigonus should be suffered to live, and be carried to Rome to Antony, he might probably before the senate be permitted to dispute his right with him: he further suggested to himself, that Anti-

gonus was of the blood royal of Judea, but Limself of mean extraction; and therefore, though the senate had declared him an enemy to the people of Rome, yet they might possibly transfer the right of the crown to his children, who were innocent. These thoughts gave Herod much perplexity: but, to put the matter out of dispute, he made use of his old argument, bribery; and sending a noble present to Antony, then at Antioch, he persuaded him of the necessity of taking off Antigonus. Antony had a great mind to preserve Antigonus to grace his triumph; but being convinced by Herod's gold more than by equity or reason, that so long as Antigonus lived, the Jews would never quietly acknowledge Herod for their king, he ordered his head to be struck off. This was an ungenerous act of Antony, and without precedent; for he was the first Roman general that subjected a conquered prince to so vile a punishment. Thus ended the reign of the famous and illustrious house of the Asmoneans, who had held the government of Judea a hundred and twenty-six years, and which might have continued longer in their family, but for their intestine dissensions.\*

All this while Hircanus the High-priest remained a captive with the Parthians, whose king Phraates, in consideration of his birth and character, treated him with

<sup>\*</sup> Dissensions., The prophet Daniel in his predictive vision of the four great empires, had beheld as a beast (differing from those which had preceded it, namely, the Babylonian, Persian, and Grecian,) Rome armed with iron-teeth, plainly expressive of its rapid conquests and desolating wars. Under the form of a republic, it had now attained its height' of greatness and power, and after reducing numerous states and kingdoms to the humble condition of tributary provinces, at length proceeded to the dangerous example of subjecting a sovereign prince to the ignominious stroke of the executioner's axe!—In the just retributions of Providence, the blood of Antigonus, the last prince of the Maccabees, who wore the crown of Judea, thus unjustly shed by the intrigues of Herod, was amply visited on the posterity of that unfeeling tyrant. The Romans, within less than an hundred years, cut off several of his descendants, and at length entirely extirpated his whole posterity.

great courtesy; and discharging him from his irons, permitted him to reside at Babylon, where a great number of Jews dwelt, who paid him not only the reverence due to him as High-priest, but the honour due to a king. Hircanus had been happy if he had contented himself with his present condition, and to which the Jews endeavoured to incline him, assuring him they would always acknowledge him for their High-priest and king. But Hircanus hearing that Herod was established in the kingdom of Judea by the Romans, and desirous of returning to his native country, began to entertain great hopes of Herod's friendship, whose interest he had formerly favoured, and saved his life. The Jews, to obviate these hopes, urged his incapacity of the pontifical dignity by reason of the loss of his ears, which Antigonus had cut off; and as for his expectation of a recompence for former benefits heaped on Herod, they advised him to consider that kings were apt to forget favours conferred on them in a private state, and that their affection was as mutable as their fortune.

Hircanus could not more studiously push his return than Herod desired it, who earnestly wished to have him in his power. For Herod's jealousy continually suggested apprehensions of danger to him, and particularly from the Asmonean family, the chief of which now was the captive pontiff Hircanus. He therefore sent a splendid embassy with rich presents to Phraates, king of Parthia, desiring him, and the Jews that lived in his dominions, not to deny him the satisfaction of paying his gratitude to Hircanus, his benefactor and preserver. Upon these solicitations, Phraates dismissed Hircanus; and Herod, the better to colour his treachery, received him with all external formality and respect, giving him the preference in all public assemblies, and calling him father. Hircanus, according to the law, being incapable of continuing in the office of High-priest, by reason of the mutilation of his body, Herod began to consider how to avoid all occasion of sedition in the choice of a successor to. Hircanus, which he concluded he could not do if he should confer that honour upon any one of an illustrious

family, and therefore he bestowed it on Hananel, a Jewish priest, whom he brought from Babylon. This gave great offence to Alexandra, Hircanus's daughter, and mother to Aristobulus and Mariamne, Herod's wife, who resenting the contempt put on her family, by setting aside her son, and obtruding a foreigner into the pontificate, she wrote to Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, to incline Antony to bestow that honour on her son. Hero'd soon obtained notice of these transactions, and calling 'a council, charged Alexandra with stirring up sedition, and attempting an alteration in the government: but she easily cleared herself, declaring the truth, and that she had no other design in writing to Cleopatra but to preserve the honour of the priesthood in her family, which was their right. Upon this they were reconciled, and Herod deposing Hananel, created Aristobulus, Alexandra's son, and brother to his wife, High-priest. reconciliation did not last long; for Herod's jealousy made him keep a watchful eye over his mother-in-law, of whom at last he grew so suspicious, that he confined her to the court, and forbad her to interfere in any part of the administration. This exasperated Alexandra, who was a woman of a haughty spirit, and could not with any temper bear the loss of her liberty; therefore she again sent to Cleopatra, deploring her present condition, and desiring relief. Cleopatra ordered her to repair to Egypt with her son, and assured her of protection. This advice pleased Alexandra, and she prepared immédiately for their departure, concealing her design from Herod. In order to their escape, she had privately prepared two biers, in which their servants were to carry them to the sea-side, where a vessel lay ready to convey them to Egypt. But this stratagem miscarried by the treachery of a servant, who communicated it to one Sabbion, who had formerly been suspected of having a hand in the poisoning of Antipater, Herod's father. Sabbion hoped, by discovering this to Herod, to make his peace with him. Herod suffered them to pass a little way, and then seized and brought them back. But fearing Cleopatra's power, who had espoused their interest, he was forced

to suspend his resentment, and seeming to pardon them, he carried himself with a great deal of kindness; but at the same time meditated a revenge, especially on Aristobulus, whom he was resolved to remove, but at present

wanted an opportunity, which soon after occurred.

At the feast of tabernacles, Aristobulus was to officiate as High-priest: he was a beautiful youth, tall and well shaped, and in the eighteenth year of his age. Being dressed in the pontifical robes, he with great majesty and state ascended to the altar, where he performed the sacred rites with a grace and becoming reverence, which so attracted the eyes of the whole assembly, that it brought to their minds the noble acts of his royal grandfather Aristobulus, whose family they thought deserved a better condition than at present they enjoyed. These and such like speeches they murmured so loudly, that Herod heard them: all which did but hasten the fate of the royal youth, though for the present Herod suppressed his malice; but soon after the feast of tabernacles, Herod perpetrated his wicked design on Aristobulus, causing him to be drowned as he was bathing; and upon his death restored Hananel to the High-priesthood.

Alexandra, hearing of the untimely fate of her son, was inconsolable, and hardly prevented from laying hands on herself. She suspected the cause of his death, but durst not mention it, wanting means to revenge it. Herod, to wipe off all suspicion from himself, visited Alexandra, and professed his innocence; and to incline her to think him sincere, he put on such a counterfeit sorrow, that any one else would have believed him but the injured Alexandra, whose resentment checked her belief, and would not suffer her to be imposed upon by his hypocritical tears.

Alexandra's grief finding no abatement, she at last projected a way to do herself justice on the author of her son's murder. She acquainted Cleopatra with Herod's treachery, and the untimely death of her son, aggravating her loss in all its circumstances. Cleopatra made the case her own, and resolved to have her righted, conti-

nually soliciting Antony to revenge the death of Aristobulus, urging, how unjust it was in Herod, after he had usurped the kingdom, thus inhumanly to persecute that unhappy family. Antony, at the importunity of Cleopatra, came to Laodicea, and sends for Herod to clear himself of this accusation concerning the death of Aristobulus. Herod not during to trust to the merits of his cause, and dreading Cleopatra, who made it her business to incense Antony against him, was in great perplexity what to do: but the necessity of the thing soon dictated to him, and it was to no purpose to dispute the will of the Roman general. Therefore, constituting his uncle Joseph, governor of the kingdom in his absence, he charged him, if things should go amiss with him before Antony, to dispatch his wife Mariamne, which he pretended he did out of excess of love to her, not being able to bear the thought of her being married to another person after his death.

Herod fearing the worst, knew that gold, if any thing, must secure his head; and therefore taking a great sum with him, he confidently went to Antony, who received his presents, and him for their sake. Insomuch, that instead of hearing and enquiring into the case, he defended Herod, and told Cleopatra, that it was below a king to give account of his actions to any, which if he did, he deserved no longer to be king. Cleopatra's hatred (as it proved afterwards) to Herod, did not proceed so much from the abhorrence of his cruel actions, as the desire she had of procuring his condemnation, that she might possess his kingdom, and of which Antony was apprised; therefore, before he proceeded on his expedition against the Parthians, he gave Cælo-Syria to Cleopatra in licu of her expectations from Judea. Herod having made his peace, and secured his interest in Antony, takes his leave. and returns home; where he no sooner arrives, but he is accosted by his sister Salome, with an accusation of indecent conversation between his uncle Joseph and his wife Mariamne. This was grounded on a pique Salome had contracted against the queen, who valuing herself on her high birth, despised the obscure extraction of

Herod's family. The queen cleared herself of these malignant aspersions; and Herod not only accepted her reasons, but asked pardon for entertaining ill thoughts of her virue. However, not knowing how viciously inclined his uncle Joseph might be, he dispatched him, and shut up his mother-in-law in close confinement.

After this, he discovered Cleopatra's sordid temper, which he appeased with many and rich presents. now having quieted his enemies at home, and secured his interest abroad, he made war with good success against the Arabians, whom he brought to terms, and obliged them to court his friendship. Then returning home, he was received with great esteem and respect by his people for his courage and conduct. But just as this sun-shine of prosperity broke out upon him, a disaster happened which had like to have ruined all his hopes; for Antony, being worsted at the battle of Actium by Augustus Cæsar, he had cause to fear lest Augustus should take away his kingdom for having been so firm a friend to Antony. This misfortune roused his jealousy, and wherever he looked he thought he perceived an enemy; but when he considered that Hircanus was vet living, and that he was the only one of the blood royal, he resolved to put a period to his life, and his own fears. To effect which, an occasion soon presented: Alexandra, Hircanus's daughter, seeing her father supinely careless and unconcerned at the miseries of his family, earnestly pressed him not so tamely to suffer Herod to be their scourge and ruin, but to demand aid of Malchus, king of Arabia, who would not fail to assist him; adding, that if Cæsar should call Herod to account for his former friendship to Antony, which might reasonably be expected, the crown would no doubt return to him. Hircanus at first refused to meddle in so dangerous an affair; but his daughter's ambition and importunity at last prevailed, and he wrote letters to Malchus, which he sent by Dositheus,\* whom

<sup>\*</sup> Dositheus. This Dositheus had little reason, if any, to betray Hircanus to Herod; for Herod was a declared enemy of Dositheus, who was a near kinsman of Joseph, whom Herod caused to be murdered; and a little before his brethren were slain at Tyre by Antony.

he thought he had made secure in his interest: but the treacherous wretch betrayed him to Herod; who to make the thing more plain and evident against Hircanus, enjoined Dositheus silence, bid him take the letter, and carry it to Malchus, the king of Arabia, who would not fail to give him an answer, which when he had got, he ordered him to bring it to him. Dositheus hastened away to Malchus, and having delivered Hircanus's letter, he soon received an answer, which he immediately brought back to Herod, who, sending for Hircanus, taxed him with holding correspondence with the king of Arabia, which he denying, Herod produced Malchus's letter. Hircanus being thus convicted had nothing to say for himself: upon which Herod caused him to be put to

death, being in the eighty-first year of his age.

Hircanus being thus disposed of, Herod prepared to wait on Cæsar, expecting no kind treatment, because of his former friendship to Antony; however, suspecting his mother-in-law Alexandra might, in his absence, occasion some tumult or intestine disturbance, he committed the government to the care of his brother Pheroras, whom he ordered to convey his mother, sister, and other relations, to the castle of Massada. But considering that by reason of the old grudge between the queen and his relations, he disposed of her and her mother Alexandra in the castle of Alexandrion, the charge of which he committed to Joseph and Sohemus, two of his faithful confidents; but he gave them commission, as he had done before to his uncle Joseph, that if they should hear things went amiss with him at Cæsar's court, they should destroy both his wife and her mother, and preserve the kingdom for his sons and his brother Pheroras.

Herod having thus disposed of his family and other affairs, went to Rhodes to meet Cæsar: where being come into his presence without his diadem, but otherwise dressed in his usual robes, he owned his friendship for Antony; that he had assisted him often with money and provisions, and was always ready to sacrifice his life and fortune for him, to whom he owed both; but now the face of affairs being changed, he assured him that he

would be as faithful to him as he had been to Antony. This, Herod delivered with such intrepidity, and so becoming an air, that Cæsar, mightily pleased with the magnanimity and spirit of the man, caused him to put on his diadem again, confirmed him in his kingdom of Judea, and received him into his friendship, assuring him that he should have the same esteem for him that

Antony had.

Herod coming off thus beyond all hope or expectation, joyfully attended Cæsar into Egypt, by the way making him and his officers many considerable presents: after which he returned to Judea loaded with honour and power, to the great wonder and surprise of the people, who expected from this interview a different turn of affairs in his fortune. As Cæsar returned from Egypt, Herod received him at Ptolemais, where he entertained him with royal magnificence, hospitably treating his army, and furnishing them with all necessaries in great plenty. This generous and munificent temper of Herod gratified the covetous disposition of Augustus, who was as ready to receive his presents, as the other was to offer them. Upon Cæsar's departure, Herod made him a present of eight hundred talents, and was so liberal to all, that he seemed profuse, beyond the wealth and revenues of his kingdom.

At his return to Judea, he found a great disorder in his family, especially in his wife and her mother, who were so incensed at their confinement, and the charge he had left with their Leepers to put them to death, if things went amiss with him upon his meeting Cæsar, that they reproached him to his face, especially Marianne; and when he with pleasure related to her the success of his interview with Cæsar, and the honour done him, it was evidently a matter of grief to her. This aversion tortured Herod: honour dictated revenge to punish her pride, but then love interceded. His own mother and sister seeing him in this perplexity, thought it the only opportunity to improve his aversion to her, and therefore they loaded her with all the calumny that malice could invent. Herod gladly heard, but unwillingly believed

them. Jealousy and love thus agitating his disturbed mind, his hatred at last prevailed, and he had determined something fatal against Mariamne, if an accident had not interposed and prevented his furious purpose: for hearing of the death of Antony and Cleopatra, and that Cæsar was possessed of all Egypt, he was obliged once more to attend him. Therefore committing his family again to Sohemus, to engage him the more to his interest, he first thanked him for his former care and service, and then invested him with the government of part of Judea in his absence. Herod was received more honourably by Cæsar than before, who conferred on him many additional favours: for he gave him Cleopatra's guard, which consisted of four hundred Gauls, and the government of that part of the country which she had possessed. He likewise added to his kingdom, on the continent, Gadara, Hippo, and Samaria; and on the coast, Gaza, Anthedon, Joppa, and the tower of Straton. Then, waiting on Cæsar to Antioch, he returned to his own country, where he found fortune as adverse at home, as it had been propitious to him abroad. Herod loved his wife Marianine even to madness, which she returned with extreme hatred and disdain. This aversion was heightened by many unhappy circumstances; and it looked like a curse on Herod to dote on the woman that hated him. She looked on him as the fatal scourge and persecutor of her family, whose right he had usurped and tyrannically but several of them to death. And when he would expostulate with her on the ingratitude and coldness with which she returned his affection, she would reproach him with the murder of her father and her brother. But that: which aggravated this unhappy difference was Mariamne's contemptuous treatment of Herod's relations with the meanness of their birth.

Herod having wasted a year after his return from Cæsar in this uneasiness, and finding his wife implacable, resolved to chastise her, though at the loss of his quiet: for suspecting an unjustifiable intimacy between his friend Sohemus and his wife, he caused him to be dispatched out of the world. But not being able to make out any

clear proof against his wife, his sister Salome furnished him with an accusation to take her off, by bribing Herod's cup-bearer to pretend to him that the queen had corrupted him to poison him. Upon this, Herod calling a council of friends only, accused her of a design to take him off; and being now grown resolute in his revenge, he gave vent to his passion, and reproached her in the vilest manner, and very unbecoming the reverence due to that assembly. The council not daring to oppose Herod's impetuous humour, joined with him in the condemnation of his innocent wife. However, his dying affection so far revived, that he consented with the council not to put her to death, but confine her to close imprisonment. Salome, who well knew her brother's temper, and fearing that so long as Mariamne lived he might relapse into his former fondness, urged the necessity of the queen's speedy execution; for if it should be known that she was confined, the people would attempt her enlargement. Upon this, Herod, who was jealous of his power, changed his mind, and commanded her to be put to death immediately. Mariamne received her doom with her usual magnanimity, not betraying the least fear in any gesture or look, but with an intrepidity and resolution uncommon to her sex, greatly submitted to the fatal stroke. Thus perished the most beautiful and innocent Marianne, who fell a sacrifice to her husband's jealousy, and the implacable malice of his relations. A woman of strict virtue, and who, but for her haughty spirit, might have spent her days in great tranquillity.

Herod soon repented of his rashness in executing his resentment so fatally; for though he had irrecoverably shaken her off from his embraces, yet her beautiful image still possessed his soul, and she was always present in his thoughts: he often called on her name, and most immoderately deplored her death: the pursuit of glory was no longer his delight; but supinely neglecting government, he indulged himself in his sorrows, and became inconsolable. In vain his friends attempted to comfort him, he had no sense of pleasure in the variety of entertainments which they prepare to divert him, and all delica-

cies are to him insipid. A pestilence happening at this time, it affected the people of all degrees, which they interpreted as a judgment from God for the unjust death of the queen. And now Herod having afflicted himself with the most pungent grief for his murdered wife, retires into the country, where in a few days he contracted a dangerous distemper: for he was seized with a violent inflammation and pain in his neck, which baffled the art of his physicians, who could give him no relief. In this condition he languished for some time at Samaria and Sebaste; during which time Alexandra, Mariamne's mother, attempted to possess herself of all the fortresses of Jerusalem: which when Herod heard, he commanded her to be put to death.

After his recovery, he built the city of Cæsarea in honour of Augustus Čæsar, and rebuilt the temple of Jerusalem, making it a most magnificent structure. The rest of his life he spent in acts of cruelty, putting to death Costobarus, husband to his own sister Salome, who was accused of treason. Nor was he less sparing of his own issue, for he caused his two sons Alexander and Aristobulus, whom he had by Mariamne, to be strangled. Not long before his own death he murdered his son Antipater. By his will he left Archelaus, whom he had by Maltace,

a Samaritan, heir to his dominions.

Herop, usually stiled the Great, the father of the last race of kings, who filled the throne of Judea, was throughout his whole reign, a consummate politician, a severe master, an inhuman father, and a profligate tyrant. The early part of his life was distinguished by great activity and cunning. By his arts and intrigues with the Romans, still more than by arms, he subverted the Asmonean family, who had possessed the supreme power about one hundred and twenty-nine years. To ingratiate himself with the Jews, to whom he was hateful on many accounts, he repaired, enlarged, and beautified the temple; but having no religion, he, at the same time, in compliment to the Romans, placed a golden eagle over the principal gate of that sacred edifice. His reign was a reign of blood; and none felt the fury of his temper and the

weight of his tyranny more severely than his own unhappy family, so that it was said of him by Augustus, "It "were better to be Herod's hog than his son." Of his children, he caused all the most promising to die by the hands of the executioner, and his most faithful friends expired in torments. By his nine wives he had many children, several of whom succeeded him in the throne, though none of them equalled him in power and magnificence. The most beloved of all his wives was Marianne, daughter of Simon the High-priest, son of John Hircanus and last of all the Maccabees, many of whom he had basely murdered; and at length his wife herself in a fit of jealousy; and one of the last acts of his ill-spent life was causing the destruction of the infants in Beth-lehem.

Of his family recorded in scripture, we notice the fol-

lowing persons who were his sons.

. Archelaus, who succeeded him, and reigned ten years in Judea, Matthew, ch. ii. ver. 22.

Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, Luke,

iii. v. 1.

Philip, Tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis. He married Salome, daughter of Herodias, who with her daughter, caused John the Baptist to be beheaded.

Herod Philip, youngest and only surviving son of Mariamne; the first husband of Herodias and father of her

daughter Salome.

Besides these sons, Herod had two grandchildren, whose father was Aristobulus, the eldest son of Mariamne, who was put to death with his brother Alexander, some time after the death of their mother. These were,

I. Agrippa, or Herod Agrippa, made by Caligula king of Judea. He slew St. James, first bishop of the church of Jerusalem, and endeavoured to destroy Peter. He afterwards died miscrably, Acts, ch. xxi. ver. 22, 23.

II. Herodias, wife of Herod Philip, and mother of

Salomé.

Of these the only descendants were,

J. Agrippa, the Second, and younger, king of some country near Judea, before whom St. Paul answered the

accusations of the Jews, and who acknowledged himself

to be, almost a Christian, Acts, ch. xxvi. ver. 28.

II. Berenice, his sister, wife of Herod, king of Chalcis. She is also mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles.

III. Drusilla, sister of Agrippa, the younger, and wife to Felix the Roman procurator of Judea; Acts, ch. xxiv.

ver. 24.

Of a family once so numerous, the fruit of so many marriages, not one of Herod's posterity lived to fill the throne beyond the third generation!\* This circumstance when contrasted with what happened to the family of David, which reigned in an unbroken line almost five hundred years, and even after the Babylonish captivity held the supreme power in Judea for several generations, must naturally arrest the attention of the most superficial observer. The Almighty disposer of all events, at whose nod empires rise and fall, and nations flourish or decay, marks with undeviating attention, and a retributive hand, not only the sins of a people, but the turpitude of sovereigns.

After the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity into their own country, their affairs continued to be administered by a succession of governors, most of whom were of the house and lineage of David, till the rise of the Asmonean family, whose zeal and courage certainly deserved the gratitude and attachment of their country. Though not of the family of Aaron, in which, by God's special appointment, the High priesthood was to remain, this dignity was vested in them as we have aiready seen, and some time after they took the title of king, which they retained till the defeat and death of Antigonus made way for Herod, and the elevation of his family to the Jewish throne. No event contributed more to the downfal of the Maccabees than the ill advised par-

<sup>\*</sup> Generation. Visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me. Exodus, ch. xx. v. 5.

tiality shewn by them alternately to the two great sects so often mentioned, and so frequently and justly condemned by the Saviour of the world, the Pharisees and Sadducees. Herod profited by the weakness of the Asmonean family, no less than by the confusion that these sectaries occasioned; but after he had put almost the whole Sanhedrim, or great council of the Jews to death, in the early part of his reign, we hear but little more of these two irreconcilable factions. It is highly probable, that the severity of his temper and great military character kept them in awe, for the Jews were never completely reconciled either to him or any one of his family. The frequent mention made in the gospels as well as in various parts of the history of the Maccabees of the leading sects, may render some account of them acceptable as well as useful for the better understanding what is said of them in the preceding history, as well as in the historical parts of the New Testament.

After the return of the Jews from Babylon, and the full settling of the Jewish church again in Judea by Ezra and Nehemiah, there arose two parties of men among them; the one, who adhering to the written word held, that in the observance of that alone they fulfilled all righteousness and therefore thought this alone sufficient to entitle them to the name of Zadikim, i. e. The righteous; the other, who over and above the written law superadded the traditional constitutions of the Elders, and other rigorous observances, which by way of supererogation they voluntarily devoted themselves to; and therefore from hence being reckoned of a superior degree of holiness above the others they were called Ceasidim, that is, the pious, who are the same that are mentioned in the Maccabees by the name of Assideans. From the former of these proceeded the Samaritans, the Sadducees, and the Karraites; and from the latter the Pharisces, and the Essenes; of all which we shall make some mention.

I. The Samaritans were no more at first, than a sort of heathens, who worshipped the God of Israel but in an idolatrous manner, and in conjunction with their other Deities, and so continued till Manasseh with other fugi-

tive Jews coming to them from Jerusalem brought with them the book of the law, and out of it taught them to reject all idolatry, and to worship the true God only according to the Mosaic institution; and from the time that they became thus reformed, they may truly be reckoned a sect

of the Jewish religion.

II. The Sadducees were at first no more than what the Karraites are now, that is, they would not receive the traditions of the elders, but stuck to the written word only. And as long as the Sadducees opposed them no further than in this matter only, they were in the right;

but afterward they imbibed other doctrines, which ren-

dered them a sect thoroughly impious. For

1st. They denied the resurrection of the dead, the being of angels, and all existences of the spirits or souls of men departed. For their notion was, that there is no spiritual being but God only; that as to man this world is his all; that at his death, body and soul die together never to live more, and that therefore there is no future reward or punishment. They acknowledged that God made this world by his power, and governs it by his providence, and for the carrying on of this government hath ordained rewards and punishments, but that they are in this world only; and for this reason alone it was, that they worshipped him and paid obedience to his laws. In short, they were Epicurean Deists in all other respects, excepting only that they allowed, that God made the world by his power, and governs it by his providence.

When men live such lives, that they cannot give God an account of them, they greedily lay hold of any scheme how false and foolish soever, that shall exempt them from it. Epicurus's boast was, that he had delivvered the world from the fear of the gods. And to lay asleep the conscience, and deliver men's minds from the fear of God, and his judgments, so as to be at liberty to sin on without reluctance or regret, is the only reason that makes any to be Epicurus's disciples. And it is most likely that this impiety among the Jews had the same origin. Under the Asmonean princes the Jews grew pros-

perous, powerful, and rich, and their riches produced great luxury and vice. To free their consciences from the fear of a future accounting for the enormities, which grew up from this root, was the true cause, that introduced this doctrine against a future state among them. This is confirmed by what Josephus writes of this sect; he tells us, that they were men of quality and riches only that were of it.

2nd. The second point of the Sudducees' heresy was about freewill and predestination. For whereas the Essenes held all things to be predetermined and fixed in an unalterable concatenation of causes never to be varied from, and the Pharisees allowed a freewill in conjunction with predestination; the Sadducees differing from both, denied all manner of predestination whatever, their doctrine being, that God had made man absolute master of all his actions with a full freedom to do either good or evil as he shall think fit to chuse, without any resistance to him for the one, or any restraint upon him as to the other. So that whether a man doeth good or evil, it is wholly from himself, because he hath it absolutely in his own power both to do the one and avoid the other. In sum they held the same doctrine among the Jews, that Pelagius did afterwards among the christians, that is, that there is no help from God either of his preventing grace or his assisting grace, but that without any such help every man hath in himself full power to avoid all the evil, which the law of God forbids, and to do all the good which it commands. And therefore looking on all men to have this power in themselves, it is remarked of them, that whenever they sat in judgment upon criminals, they always were for the severest sentence against them. And indeed their general character was, that they were very ill-natured, churlish, and morose in their bchaviour to each other, but cruel and savage to all besides. Their number was the smallest of all the sects of the Jews, but they were men of the best quality, and the greatest riches among them. And it is too often found, that those who abound most in the things of this world are the forwardest to neglect and disbelieve the promises of a

better. All those that were of the greatest power and riches among the Jews being cut off in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, this whole sect seems then to have perished with them. For we find no mention made of them as a sect in being for many ages after, till their name was revived again in the Karraites, which is the next sect of the Jews, that we shall give an account of.

III. These Karraites, though in the way of reproach they are called Sadducees by the other Jews, yet agree with them in nothing else, but in rejecting all traditions, and adhering only to the written word. Here indeed the Sadducees first began, but afterwards went further into those impious doctrines above described, which the Karraites have not. For in all other matters they agree with the other Jews, neither do they absolutely reject all traditions, but only refuse to allow them the same authority, as they do to the written word. They are content to admit them as the opinions of the former doctors, as human helps for the interpreting and the better understanding of the written word, as far as they shall find them conducive thereto, but not to equal them to the written word itself, which all the other Jews do. For as to these other Jews I have shewn in the former part of this history, how they hold, that besides the written law, there was also given to Moses from mount Sinai an oral law of the same authority with the former; under this latter they comprehend all their traditions, and therefore think themselves under the same obligation to observe them, as the written word itself, or rather a greater. For they observe not the written word any otherwise than as interpreted by their traditions. And therefore having in process of time gathered all these traditions into that voluminous book called their Talmud, they required the same deference and veneration to be paid that book, as to the Holy Scriptures themselves, founding all their articles of faith upon its dictates, and regulating their practice in all things according to the directions and precepts that are therein. This book was pub-- lished about the beginning of the sixth century after Christ. But when it came to be scanned and examined by such as were men of sense and judgment among them,

they not being able to conceive how such trash, nonsense, and incredible fables, as they found heaped up therein, could come from God, were so shocked hereby, that they could not give up their faith to it; but reserving that wholly for the written word of God (that is the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa) receive the other only as a work of human composure to be used as an help for the interpreting and explaining the written word in such passages of it, where it should be found conducive thereto; and for some time their dissent on this point, went on without making any breach or schism among them, till about the year of our Lord seven hundred and fifty. But then Anan, a Jew of Babylonia, of the stock of David, and Saul his son, both learned men in their way, having openly declared for the written word only, and publickly disclaimed and condemned all manner of traditions, excepting such alone as agreed therewith, this soon produced a rent and a schism among them, so that they became divided into two parties, the one standing up for the Talmud and its traditions, and the other rejecting and disowning both, as containing in their opinion the inventions of men, and not the doctrines and commands of God.

But the greatest sect of the Jews was that of the Pharisees; for they had not only the Scribes, and all the learned men in the law of their party; but they also drew after them all the bulk of the common people. They differed from the Samaritans in that besides the law they received the prophets, the Hagiographa, and the traditions of the elders, and from the Sadducces, differed not only in these particulars, but also in their doctrines about a future state and the resurrection of the dead, and upon predestination and freewill. Yet, it is hard to say, what their doctrine was as to this matter; for according to Josephus they held absolute predestination with the Essenes, and freewill with the Sadducees jumbled together. For they ascribed to God and fate all that is done, and yet left to man the freedom of his will. But the main distinguishing character of this sect was their zeal for the traditions of the Elders, which they derived from the same fountain with the written word itself, pretending both to have been delivered to Moses from mount Sinai, and

These men, by reason of their pretences to a more nice and rigorous observance of the law according to their traditions, which they had superadded to it, looked on themselves as more holy than other men, and therefore separated themselves from those, whom they thought sinners, or profane, so as not to eat or drink with them; and hence from the Hebrew word Pharaz, which signifieth to separate, they had the name of Pharisees, which is as much as

to say Separatists.

In conjunction with the Pharisees, the Scribes are often mentioned in the scriptures of the New Testament. But they were not a sect, but a profession of men following literature. They were of divers sorts. For generally all that were any way learned among the Jews were in the time of our Saviour and his apostles called Scribes, but especially those, who by reason of their skill in the law and divinity of the Jews, were advanced to sit in Moses's seat, and were either judges in their Sanhedrims, or teachers in their schools or synagogues. They were mostly of the sect of the Pharisees. The learning of the Jews in those times lying in their pharisaical traditions, and their way of interpreting (or we may rather say wresting) the scriptures by them. And they being the men, that dictated the law both of church and state, hence lawyers and Scribes are convertible terms in the gospels, and both of them do there signify the same sort of men. For the same person, who in Matthew xvii. 35, is called a lawyer, is in Mark xii. 28, said to be one of the Scribes.

V. But how rigorous soever the Pharisees pretended to be in their observances, the Essenes out-went them herein. For being originally of the same sect with them they reformed upon them, in the same manner as among the Romanists, the Carthusians and the Cistertians have upon the Benedictines, and set up for a much more severe, and perchance for a much more unblameable rule of living, than

the other did.

Although our Saviour very often censured all the other sects then among the Jews, yet he never spake of the Essenes, neither is there any mention of them through the

whole scriptures of the New Testament. This proceeded, some think, from their retired way of living. For their abode being mostly in the country they seldom came into cities, nor were they in our Saviour's time ever seen at the the temple, or in any public assembly, and therefore not falling in the way of our Saviour's observation, for this reason, say they, he took no notice of them. But it is much more likely, that being a very honest and sincere sort of people without guile or hypocrisy, they gave no reason for that reproof and censure, which the others very justly deserved. Their way of living was very peculiar and remarkable.

They had riches in great contempt; and community of goods was maintained among them in a very admirable manner; for not any one was to be found among them possessing more than another, it being a fixed rule of their sect, that every one, who enters into it must give up all his goods into the public stock of the society, so that among the whole number none could be found lower than another by reason of his poverty, nor any on the other side elevated above the rest by his riches; for every man's goods being cast into the common stock, they were all enjoyed as one possession among brethren in the same family for each man's use.

They were in what pertained to God in an especial manner religious. For before the sun was risen they spoke of no common worldly matter; but till then offered up unto God their prayers in ancient forms received from their predecessors, supplicating particularly in them, that he

would make the Sun to rise upon them.

There was another sect among the Jews called the Herodians, having its rise from Herod, king of Judea, called Herod the Great, mentioned often in the gospels. Some say it was, because they held Herod to be the Messiah; so Tertullian, Epiphanius, St. Jerom, St. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and several others of the ancients held. But it is very improbable, that any Jews should in the time of our Saviour's ministry, above thirty years after the death of Herod hold him to have been the Messiah, when they had found no one of those particulars, which they expected from the Messiah, performed by him, but rather every

thing quite the contrary. By what is mentioned of these Herodians in the gospels, they seem plainly to have been a sect among the Jews differing from the rest in some points of their law and religion. For they are there named with the Pharisces, and in contradistinction from them, and therefore must have been a sect in the same manner as the Pharisees were. And they are also said to have a peculiar leaven, as the Pharisees had, that is, some false and evil tenets, which soured and corrupted the whole lump, with which it was mingled; and therefore Christ equally warned his disciples against both. And since he calleth it the leaven of Herod, this argues, that Herod was the author of it, that is of those evil tenets, which constituted this sect, and distinguished it from the other sects of the Jews, and that his followers imbibing those tenets from him were for this reason called Herodians. And these being chiefly of his courtiers, and the officers and servants of his palace, and those that were descended from them, hence the Syriac version, wherever the word Herodians occurs in the original, renders it the domestics of Herod. It being said, Deut. xvii. ver. 15, "One from among thy "brethren shalt thou set king over thee, thou mayest not "set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother;" hence an opinion arose, which was generally embraced by the Pharisees, that it was not lawful to submit to the Roman emperor, or pay taxes unto him; but Herod and his followers understanding the text to exclude only a voluntary choice, and not a necessary submission, whereforce hath over-powered choice, were of a contrary opinion, and held it lawful in this case both to submit to the Roman emperor, and also to pay taxes to him. And therefore the Pharisees and the Herodians being of opinion in this matter quite contrary to each other, those that laid snares for Christ, and sought an occasion against him, sentthe disciples of both these sects at the same time together to propose this captious question to him, Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? thinking which way soever he should answer to bring him into danger. For should he answer in the negative, the Herodians were there ready to accuse him of being an enemy to Cæsar; and should he answer in the affirmative, the Pharisees were

as ready on the other hand to accuse him to the people, and excite them against him, as an enemy to their rights, they having possessed them with this notion against paying tax-

es to any foreign power.

The Jews are charged in some instances, of having corrupted their scriptures, and omitted or altered passages plainly predictive of the coming of Christ since our Saviour was upon earth. But it has happened, through the good providence of God, that some of their most ancient writings; (besides the Scriptures) to which they give with an obstinaey and perverseness not easily accounted for, an equal degree of veneration to what is due to the revealed word only, are still preserved, and afford unquestionable evidence, that many of the prophecies recorded in the Old Testament, are applicable to Jesus of Nazareth only. That no forced construction can twist them so as to mean any other; and that in him the GREAT REDEEMER, the law is fulfilled for righteousness to them that believe, and that all the types, shadows, and ceremonies of the Jewish economy are finished, completed, and for ever done away.

The Targums or paraphrases were made for the use and instruction of the vulgar Jews after their return from the Babylonish captivity. For although many of the better sort still retained the knowledge of the Hebrew language during that captivity, and taught it their children, and the Holy Scriptures that were delivered after that time, excepting only some parts of Daniel and Ezra and one verse in Jeremiah, were all written therein; yet the common people, by having so long conversed with the Babylonians, learned their language, and forgot their It happened indeed otherwise to the children of Israel in Egypt. For although they lived there above three times as long as the Babylonish captivity lasted, yet they still preserved the Hebrew language among them, and brought it back entire with them into Canaan. The reason of this was, that in Egypt they all lived together in the land of Goshen; but on their being carried captive by the Babylonians, they were dispersed all over Chaldea and Assyria, and being there intermixed with the people of the land, had much intercourse with them, and therefore were forced to learn their language, and this

soon induced a disuse of their own among them. this means it came to pass, that after their return, the common people, especially those of them who had been bred up in that captivity, understood not the Holy Scriptures in the Hebrew language, nor their posterity after them. And therefore when Ezra read the law to the people, he had several persons standing by him well skilled in both the Chaldee and Hebrew languages, who interpreted to the people in Chaldee what he first read to them in Hebrew. And afterwards when the method was established of dividing the law into fifty-four sections, and of reading one of them every week in their synagogues (according as hath been already described) the same course of reading to the people the Hebrew text first, and then interpreting it to them in Chaldee, was still continued. For when the reader had read one verse in Hebrew, an interpreter standing by rendered it into Chaldee, and then the next verse being read in Hebrew, it was in like manner interpreted in the same language as before, and so on from verse to verse was every verse alternately read first in the Hebrew, and then interpreted in Chaldee to the end of the section; it was this which first gave occasion for the making of Chaldee versions for the help of those interpreters. And they thenceforth became necessary not only for their help in the public synagogues, but also for the use of the people at home in their families, that they might there have the Scriptures for their private reading in a language which they understood.

Synagogues having multiplied among the Jews beyond the number of able interpreters, it became necessary that such versions should be made for the help of the less able. This was done at first only for the law, because the law only was publicly read in their synagogues till the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes; but after that time lessons being read out of the prophets in those religious assemblies, as well as out of the law, the same reason rendered it necessary, that Chaldee versions should be made of these Scriptures also. And secondly, the use of the people (which was the other reason for the composing of those versions) made this necessary for all the scripture, as well as for the law and the prophets.

For all scripture being given for our edification, all ought for this end to have them in a language which they understand. For when God gave his law unto Israel, he enjoined, that they should have his commandments, statutes, and judgments always in their hearts, that they should meditate on them day and night, teach them their children, and talk of them, when they sat in their houses, and when they walked by the way, and when they lay down, and when they rose up; and that all might be the better enabled to perform all this, it was strictly enjoined by a constitution of the elders from ancient times, that every man should have by him at home a copy of the Holy Scriptures fairly written out either by his own, or if he could not write himself, by some other hand, for his instruction herein. But how could this be done, if they had those scriptures only in a language, which they did not understand? It was necessary therefore, that as they had the Hebrew text for the sake of the original, so also that they should have the Chaldee version for the sake of helping them to understand it. Indeed the letter of the law which commands what I have here mentioned, extends no further than to the five books of Moses; for no more of the Holy Scriptures were then written, when that law was given; and also the constitution abovementioned, which was superadded by the elders, is by positive words limited thereto. But the reason of the thing extended to the whole word of God. For since all of it is given for our instruction, we are all equally obliged to know each part of it, as well as the other. And therefore this caused, that at length the whole scriptures were thus translated from the Hebrew into the Chaldean language for the sake of those who could not otherwise understand them. For to lock up from the people in an unknown language, that word of God, which was given to lead them to everlasting life, was a thing that was not thought agreeable either to reason or piety in those times.

As the Targum of Onkelos is the first in order of place, as being on the Pentateuch, which is the first part of the Holy Scriptures; so we think it is not be to doubted, but that it is the first also in order of time, and the most an-

cient that was written of all that are now extant. This Targum of Onkelos is rather a version, than a paraphrase. For it renders the Hebrew text word for word, and for the most part accurately and exactly, and it is by much the best of all this sort. And therefore it hath always been had in esteem among the Jews much more than all the other Targums, and being set to the same musical notes with the Hebrew text, it is thereby made capable of being read in the same tone with it in their public assemblies. And that it was accordingly there read alternately with the text in the manner as is above described, Elias Levita tells us, who of all the Jews that have handled this argument, hath written the most accurately and fully on it. For he says, That the Jews holding themselves obliged every week in their synagogues to read twice that Parashah or section of the law, which was the lesson of the week, (that is in the Hebrew original first, and then in the Chaldee interpretation) made use of the Targum of Onkelos for this purpose; and that this was their usage even down to his time (which was about the first part of the sixteenth century.) And that for this reason, though till the art of printing was invented there were of the other Targums scarce above one or two of a sort to be found in a whole country; yet then the Targum of Onkelos was every where among them.

The next Targum to that of Onkelos is the Targum of Jonathan Ben Uzziel on the prophets, which is next it also in the purity of its style, but is not like it in the manner of its composition. For whereas the Targum of Onkelos is a strict version, rendering the Hebrew text word for word, Jonathan takes on him the liberty of a paraphrast by enlargements and additions to the text. For therein are inserted several stories, and also several glosses of his own, which do not much commend his work; and more of this is to be found in that part which is on the latter prophets, than in that which is on the former. For in that latter part he is more lax and paraphrastical, and less accurate and clear, than in the other. The books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings are cal-

led the former prophets, and the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah,

Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets the latter.

The third Targum in the order above mentioned is that on the law, which is also ascribed to Jonathan Ben Uzziel, But that it is none of his is sufficiently proved by the style, which is wholly different from that, wherein is written the true Targum of Jonathan (that upon the prophets, which all allow to have been his) as will very plainly appear to all such as shall thoroughly compare them together; and besides its enlargements in the paraphrastical way by glosses, fables, prolix explications, and other additions, are much beyond what we find practised by Jonathan in that Targum which is truly his.

That the Targums of Onkelos on the law, and Jonathan on the prophets, are as ancient as our Saviour's time, if not still older, is the general opinion of both Jews and Christians; the Jewish historians positively say it. For they tell us that Jonathan was the most eminent of all the scholars of Hillel, who died about the time-that our Saviour was born, and that Onkelos was contemporary with Gamaliel the elder, the same that was St. Paul's master, and

one of the Jewish sanhedrim.

The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are in so great esteem among the Jews, that they hold them to be of the same authority with the original sacred text; and for the support of this opinion they feign them to be derived from the same fountain. For they say, that when God delivered the written law unto Moses from mount Sinai, he delivered with it at the same time the Chaldee paraphrase of Onkelos in the same manner, as they say, he then did the oral law; and so that when by his Holy Spirit he dictated unto the prophets the scriptures of the prophetical books, he delivered severally to them upon each book the Targum of Jonathan at the same time. And that both these Targums were delivered down by tradition through such faithful hands, as God by his providence had appointed, the first from Moses, and the other from the prophets themselves, who were the writers of these prophetical books till at length through this chain of traditional descent they came down to the hands of Onkelos and Jonathan, and that all they did was only to put them into writing.

Those Targums are the most ancient books the Jews have next to the Hebrew Scriptures. This is certain of the Targums of Onkelos on the law, and of Jonathan on the prophets: and although the others are of a later date, yet they were for the most part transcribed and composed out of other ancient glosses and Targums, which were in use long before. Such we have shewn they had soon after the time of Ezra; but these being written in the pure Jerusalem dialect of the Chaldee language must in those times, in which the language of the Jerusalem Talmud, and of the later Targums was spoken, be as much an unknown language to the people, as formerly the Hebrew was to them on their return from the Babylonish captivity.

They are all of them of great use for the better understanding not only of the Old Testament on which they are written, but also of the New. As to the Old Testament they vindicate the genuineness of the present Hebrew text by proving it the same, that was in use, when these Targums were made, contrary to the opinion of some who think the Jews corrupted it after our Saviour's time. They help to explain many words and phrases in the Hebrew original, for the meaning of which we should otherwise have been at a loss; and they hand down to us many of the ancient customs and usages of the Jews, which greatly help to the illustrating of those Scriptures,

on which they are written.

They also very much serve the christian cause against the Jews, by interpreting many of the prophecies of the Messiah in the Old Testament in the same manner as the christians do, and we shall here instance some of them.

Gen. iii. 15, God said unto the serpent, "It (that is the seed of the woman) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Christians interpret this of the Messiah and his kingdom; and the Jerusalem Targum and that called Jonathan's on the law do the same.

Gen. xlix. 10. Jacob prophesieth that "The sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh should come." Christians understand this of the Messiah, and from thence prove against the Jews, that the Messiah must according to this

prophecy of him have been long since come; because long since, that is for many ages past, there hath been no regal power in Judah, no prince of that nation ruling with the seeptre over them; nor any from between their feet, that is any born of that people, to make laws or administer justice among them, and because for many ages past the whole Jewish polity hath intirely ceased, and they have no where, since the time of Jesus Christ the true Messiah, been governed by their own princes, or their own laws; but every where by strangers, and the laws of strangers, among whom they have lived. The Jews to evade the force of this manifest argument against them object, first, that the word Shebet in the Hebrew text, which we interpret a sceptre, the instrument of rule, signifieth also a rod, which is the instrument of chastisement, and therefore say, that though this should be understood of the Messiah, the meaning would be no more than that their chastisement, that is the banishment which they now suffer in their dispersions among strange nations, should not eease (as they all reekon it will not) till their Messiah shall come to deliver them from it. But in the second place they object, that they do not allow that the Messiah is meant by the word Shiloh in this prophecy. But in both these particulars the Chaldee paraphrases are against them. For the words of Onkelos in this text are, "There shall not be taken away from Judah one having the principality, nor the seribe from the sons of his children, till the Messiah shall come." And the Jerusalem Targum, or paraphrase, and that called Jonathan's agree with him in both these particulars. For they both interpret Shebet, of the principality, and Shiloh of the Messiah, and therefore all three of them help the christian cause in this matter.

Numb. xxiv. 17. Part of the prophecy of Balaam there recited, is, "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a seeptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall bear rule over all the children of Seth." The Christians interpret this of the Messiah, and so does Onkelos in his Targum on that place, for his words are, "A king shall rise out of the house of Jacob, and the Messiah shall be anointed out of the house of Israel, who shall rule over all the sons of men." And

the Targum called Jonathan's interprets this of the Messiah in the same manner also, as that of Onkelos does; and it is here to be observed that the Targumists rightly render this phrase, "All the children of Seth," by the phrase, "All the sons of men." For all the children of Seth, since the flood, are the same with all the children of Adam, and these are all men. And this shews, that according to this prophecy the kingdom of the Messiah was not to be a peculiar kingdom for the Jews, but universal for all mankind. And agreeably hereto, Maimonides interprets this whole text. His words are as follow: "A sceptre shall rise out of Israel; this is the king Messiah; and shall smite the corners of Moab; this is David, as it is written (2 Sam. viii. 2.) and he smote Moab, &c. And he shall bear rule over the children of Seth; this is the king Messiah, of whom it is written (Psalm lxxii. 8.) He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." In Tract. Melakin, cap. 11. 1.

Isaiah ix. 6, 7. The words of the prophet are, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace; of the increase of his government there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment, and with justice from henceforth even for ever." Christians all hold that this is spoken of the Messiah, and Jonathan in the Targum which is truly

his, does on that place say the same.

Isaiah xi. This whole chapter the Christians understand to be of the Messiah, and the peaceableness and happiness of his kingdom. Jonathan does the same in his Targum, and in it twice makes mention of it, that is on the

first verse, and on the sixth.

Isaiah lii. and liii. What is contained in these two chapters from the seventh verse of the first of them to the end of the other, is all a continued prophecy of the Messiah. So St. John in his gospel xii. 38, and St. Paul to the Romans, x. 16, teach us, and so all Christians hold,

having such authority for it. But the description there given of a suffering Messiah not agreeing with the notion which the Jews have of him, who expect a Messiah reigning in temporal pomp and power, several of them reject this interpretation, and wrest the whole prophecy to other meanings; some of them understanding it of Josiah, some of Jeremiah, and others of the whole people of Israel. But the Targum of Jonathan interprets it of the Messiah, as the christians do, and twice within the compass of the prophecy (that is, ch. lii. 13, and ch. liii. 10,) applies it to him. Jonathan having composed this Targum before Christ's time, the serving of neither party can be supposed then to have influenced him to have written otherwise, than appeared to him to be the plain sense of the passage, and that this prophecy can be understood of none other than the Messiah is manifest from the whole tenor of it, and it is as manifest, that it was all completed in Christ the Lord. And therefore other's among the Jews having rightly judged, that the wrestings abovementioned are not sufficient to baffle the true meaning of this prophecy, have for the evading it, invented another device; that is, that there are to be two Messiahs, and both yet to come, one of which they say is to be of the tribe of Ephraim, (and they therefore call him Messiah the son of Ephraim, and sometimes Messiah the son of Joseph) and the other of the tribe of Judah, and the lineage of David; and they therefore call him Messiah the son of David. The first of these (who they say, will be the forerunner of the other) they make to be a suffering Messiah, and tell us of him, that he is to fight against Gog, and having overcome him shall afterwards be slain by Armillus, whom they hold to be the greatest enemy that shall ever appear against the church of God in this world. And of this Messiah the son of Ephraim they interpret all that is foretold in the Old Testament of the sufferings of Christ our Lord, especially what is foretold of him in this prophecy of Isaiali, and in that of Zechariah xii. 10, in which last they interpret the words, "whom "they have pierced," of his being to be pierced and run through by the sword of Armillus, when he shall be slain

by him. The other Messiah, that is, Messiah the son of David, they make to be a conquering and reigning Messiah, that shall conquer and kill Armillus, and restore the kingdom of Israel, and there reign in the highest glory and felicity; and of him they interpret all that is said in the Scriptures of the Old Testament of the glory, power, and righteousness of Christ's kingdom. But all that they thus tell us of their twofold Messiah is a mere fiction, framed without so much as a pretence to any foundation in Scripture for it; a pitiful fetch invented only to evade what they cannot answer; and their being forced to have recourse to such a wretched shift is a plain giving up of the cause they cannot defend.

Micah v. 2. The words of the prophet are, "And thou Bethlehem Ephratah shalt be chief among the thousands of Judah; out of thee shall come forth unto me HE, that is to be ruler in Israel." This is the true translation of the Hebrew text, and this, all christians understand of the Messiah, and so, anciently did the chief priests and Scribes of the people of the Jews, when consulted by Herod. But since that time, in opposition to the gospel, Jewish writers have endeavoured to give this text another meaning, some interpreting it of Hezekiah, some of Zerubbabel, . and some otherwise. But Jonathan, who probably was one among those Scribes, whom Herod consulted, gives the true meaning of it by interpreting it of the Messiah, in the same manner as Christians do. For his version of this text is. Out of thee shall come forth before me THE MESSIAH, WHO SHALL EXERCISE SOVEREIGN RULE OVER ISRAEL.

Psalm ii. This Psalm the Christians interpret to be a prophecy of the Messiah, and hold it to be all fulfilled in our Saviour and the erection of his kingdom against all opposition, which it met with from Jews and heathens, and the princes, and rulers of the earth. And so the Holy apostles understood it of old, Acts iv. 25, 26, 27, and ch. xiii. 33. Hebrews i. 5. In opposition hereto the Jews apply it wholly and solely to David himself, and will allow it no other meaning either literal or typical, but what is terminated in his person. But the Targum is on our

side, for it interprets this Psalm to be a prophecy of the

Messiah, as all Christians do.

Psalm xlv. This Psalm also Christians interpret to be of the Messiah, and they have for it the authority of the holy penman of the epistle to the Hebrews, ch. i. ver. 8. In opposition hereto, the Jews apply it wholly and solely to Solomon, and will allow it no other meaning either literal or typical, but what is terminated in his person, and the marriage which he made with the daughter of Pharaoh; but the Targum is on our side in this matter, and interprets it to be a prophecy of the Messiah, as all christians do.

Psalm lxxii. This Psalm also the Jews interpret of Solomon; but Christians understand it as a prophecy of the Messiah; and the Targum is on our side herein; for it applies it to the Messiah in the same manner as we do. Many other instances might be produced out of these Targums, wherein the prophecies of the Old Testament are illustrated and explained for the advantage of the Christian cause against all opposers. But these are sufficient to give the reader a taste of all the rest, and also to shew how useful these Targums may be to a Christian Divine in all controversies about the Messiah, especially against the Jews. For these Targums being their own books, all arguments taken out of them, if any thing can convince that obstinate people, must be of a very convincing force against them, especially when they are out of the Targums of Onkelos on the Law, and Jonathan on the Prophets, for these they hold to be of the same authority with the sacred word itself.

Having already noticed the death of Herod, and the situations filled by his posterity, it is necessary to remark, that though he reigned, during his latter years, in apparent peace and tranquillity, no one ever suffered more than he did from the confusions and disaffections of his own family, the hatred of his subjects, and the contempt of all good men. We have already drawn his character in the preceding pages in a few words. In his last moments the hand of God was evidently upon him; the diseases of his body and the torments of his mind

were dreadful beyond all conception. The image of his murdered wife and her innocent children were continually before his eyes, and haunted his gloomy and affrighted imagination with inconceivable horrors. Throughout his whole reign he possessed great activity both of body and mind, and this, joined to an undeviating perseverance, carried him through all obstacles, and enabled him to attain every object of his ambition, avarice, or revenge. In gratifying the latter passion no man ever equalled him. Though outwardly a Jew, and for political convenience an occasional conformist, he was throughout his whole life totally destitute of religion. Long before he died, the seeds of dissolution of the Jewish nation and government were thickly sown and universally diffused. We have glanced at a few of them while painting the monstrous absurdities, profane tenets, and hypocritical pretences of the leading sects of the Jewish people. But there was superadded to all these an almost universal laxity of all moral obligations, and Judea, long before the death of Herod, swarmed with robebrs and assassins. Many of these Herod had put to death, and the Roman soldiers stationed in various parts of the country, destroyed them by hundreds, but this, instead of diminishing, seemed only to increase the evil. The close connexions formed by the king with the triumvir, Mark Antony, and his frequent compliances with the idolatrous customs of the Romans, gave full scope to the hatred of the Jews against him, and some colourable sanction to the opinion which began very generally to prevail, that it was not lawful to pay tribute to the Romans. This absurd idea, under the assumed garb of patriotism, contributed in no small degree to the overthrow of the nation.

In his public buildings and founding cities, Herod displayed his taste and magnificence above most of the monarchs of his time. Having built Cæsarca as a sea-port to Jerusalem, and so named it in honour of his friend and benefactor the emperor Augustus, he there instituted games, which were performed every five years in imitation of the Olympic Games, and consecrated them to Cæsar.

In the isle of Rhodes he erected a magnificent temple to Apollo, and gave away vast sums wherever he travelled to embellish the different cities of Greece and Syria; for his temper, though both covetous and brutal in the extreme, gave way on all public occasions to that passion, which men of the world call honour, and the generality of historians, the Love of Glory.—A fatal misnomer, which has misled kings and conquerors equally astray from their own real happiness, and the good of their people, and deluged the earth with human blood! Not long before the death of Herod, his eldest son, Antipater, plotted against his life, and with his uncle Pheroras procured poison to dispatch him. This villainous design was kept a profound secret, until Pheroras falling sick while the poison was in his possession, was so affected at the sight of Herod when he came to visit him, that feeling some remorse, he directed it to be thrown into the fire. This was accordingly done by the wife of Pheroras; but a small part of it was kept and laid by for her own use, should the tyranny of the king, which all of his family had so much reason to dread, and she in particular, oblige her to use it. Antipater was of a like temper with his father Herod, and had he not been cut off by the just hand of Providence, he would in all human probability have trod in his steps, and equalled him in cruelty. But his career was now almost at an end, and his fall affords a just example to all ages, that there is nothing however secret, that can be hid from the eye of God. He had been the principal contriver of the death of his two brothers, Aristobulus, and Alexander, the innocent sons of Mariamne, for no other reason, but, that they were on the mother's side descended from the family of the Maccabees, favourites with the people, and though younger than himself, yet as he conceived, stood in his way to the crown. The death of his uncle Pheroras brought about the destruction and just punishment of Antipater: for Herod knowing, that the people suspected him of having destroyed his brother by poison, caused his domestics to be tortured to confess the circumstances of his death, and while in agonies, they confessed

the grand secret of Antipater's intention to poison the king! The former was then at Rome, but Herod fearing his son should escape him, wrote kind and endearing letters, desiring his return on account of his own increasing age and infirmities, carefully concealing from him his knowledge of the plot, and the confession of Pheroras's wife, who when apprehended, threw herself from the top of her house, but being taken up alive, made a full confession of the whole affair, and produced as evidence of it the small remains of the deadly potion which she had reserved when Pheroras ordered her to throw it into the fire. Just before his return from Rome, Antipater endeavoured to inflame his father Herod against two other of his brothers\* then in that city, to which they had been sent for their education. Full of hopes that his endeavours for these base purposes would remove all obstacles, and destroy every competitor for the throne, he set out for Judea, little dreaming of the fate which there awaited him. Being unexpectedly arrested, and on his trial confronted with his own servants, his guilt was completely proved, and he suffered death, by a just sentence, only five days before Herod himself expired. One of the last acts of that merciless tyrant's reign was of so monstrous a complexion, as would shake the credulity of the present age, were it not so fully attested by the Jewish historian Josephus as to leave no doubt of its reality. Aware that he was universally hated by the Jews, and that his death which was fast approaching under the pressure of diseases of the most horrible and painful nature, would diffuse a general joy instead of mourning for his loss, he formed a design every way worthy of such a tyrant, and the destroyer of the infants at Bethlehem. Having suffered beyond all that can be described, devoured while alive of vermine, and rotting piece-meal in his extremities, he went toward Jericho,

<sup>\*</sup> Brothers. One of these was Archelaus who succeeded Herod in the kingdom of Judea. He is particularly mentioned, Matt. ch. ii. ver. 22. After having reigned about nine years, his cruelty and tyranny gave such offence to the Romans, that they deposed and banished him to Vienne in Gaul, where he died.

and there, when near his end, having got all the chiefs of the Jewish nation together, under penalty of death, he shut them all up in the Hippodrome,\* and then sending for his sister Salome, a woman almost as wicked as himself, and her husband Alexas, he earnestly entreated them that as soon as he expired, they would order his soldiers to slay every one of those unhappy men, that thus the whole nation of the Jews might be forced to mourn at his death! This they were obliged to promise, but he had no sooner expired than they were released from their fears and confinement, and the joy of his death was as universal as the terrors and hatred of the people had been throughout his whole life, which as well to his own family as his people, had been a reign of terror. But though we have thought proper thus to notice as a conclusion to the second volume, the end of this impious and cruel tyrant, we shall in the succeeding volume resume the narrative of events connected with the two last years of his life. Events the most stupendous in nature; To MAN the most interesting: To God the most glorious. The baptism of repentance by John; the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of the GREAT REDEEMER; the establishment of the Christian church, and the final destruction of the Jewish state, with their intire dispersion and ruin as a people and nation.

<sup>\*</sup> Hippodrome. The place for the horse and chariot races. -

COMPLETE

## HISTORY

OF THE

## Holy Bible.

BOOK THE EIGHTH.

Of the Birth and Infancy of our Lord and Saviour

## Jesus Christ.

The wars and conquests of Alexander the Great, and the subsequent division of his extensive empire among his captains and generals, served to diffuse the knowledge of the Greek language universally among the numerous nations which composed his dominions. All who affected superior civilization and refinement, were proud to patronize, and ambitious to possess Grecian literature, and a taste for the fine arts of that elegant but corrupt people. Greece, during the struggle for power which disgraced the immediate successors of the first Roman em-

peror, fell beneath the Roman yoke, and her arts of voluptuousness and refinement contributed in no small degree to enervate the capital of the world. Idolatry was every where triumphant, and licentious manners carried to an extent hardly credible in modern times. But the eye of Providence was not closed during this awful period of general depravity; darkness had literally covered the earth, and gross darkness the people, and the absolute necessity of a reformation by some great teacher, or by an immediate Revelation from heaven was so necessary, that even the wisest philosophers of Greece and Rome were fully persuaded, that nothing short of supernatural means were sufficient for the reformation of mankind.

A knowledge of the Greek language, and of the Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament, were generally diffused, through the munificent liberality of the Ptolemys, kings of Egypt, who had caused them to be translated into Greek, which, in a short time, greatly contributed to spread the knowledge of christianity when preached to the different nations and people, who, at this time, composed the Roman empire. The period was fast approaching when the great Creator of the world, intending to recover mankind from that fallen and miserable state in which the sin of their first parents had involved them, was about to perform the covenant of his promise made with Adam, that the "Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head" by sending his Son into the world, that he, by the offering up of himself once for transgressors, might thereby make a full, perfect, complete sacrifice, oblation, and atonement for the sins of the whole world, and bring in an everlasting righteousness. Such was the end and design for which the GLORIOUS REDEEMER became flesh and dwelt among us; that while countless millions of the human race, A great multitude which no man could number, should be born again to holiness of life, to happiness here, and eternal felicity in the world to come, they should owe all their salvation to God alone through

Christ, and that HE, as the author and bestower of ever-

lasting life should receive ALL the glory.\*

In taking a retrospective view of the various empires. nations, and kingdoms, which have appeared for a while upon the great theatre of this world, and have then sunk into oblivion to rise no more, their progress, and decline, forcibly arrest our attention, excite our curiosity, and call forth our compassion. The causes of their dissolution are easily traced both in profane history and the sacred pages of inspiration. They are all connected with a disregard to God: neglect of his laws; gross idolatry; and corruption of manners. Rome having swallowed up all that part, or the greater portion of it which had constituted the three first great empires, the Assyrian or Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, and the Grecian, was, in the midst of all her conquests, wholly incapable of reforming the morals or purifying the manners of her subjects, but on the contrary, rather gave a sanction to all those corruptions which had already brought destruction upon the nations of antiquity!

Many of those nations and kingdoms once so great and flourishing, have not only disappeared, but even their names, and all remembrance of them must have perished, had they not been preserved in the historical records of scripture. In them we behold, however, the fading splendor of all human glory, and an abridged

<sup>\*</sup> Glory. "Its blest effects low reaching to the earth;
Its tow'ring summit lost beyond the thought
Of man or angel!

The ransom was paid down

ALL PRICE BEYOND: tho' curious to compute,
Archangels fail'd to cast the mighty sum!
Its value vast, ungrasp'd by minds create,
For ever hides, and glows in the Supreme."

picture of every thing which the world calls GREAT.\* Brilliancy of taste, eminence of genius, the glory of arms, extent of dominion, the perfection of arts and sciences, ability to govern, the powers of eloquence; and in those who possessed all these; what powerful and glorious kings! what renowned statesmen! what sage philosophers! what wise magistrates! what admirable legislators. In many of them, how much have we been led to admire their ardent zeal for justice; their passionate love of their country; their generous contempt of riches; and not unfrequently their esteem of poverty! Such virtues astonish us not a little, so much do they appear above the level of human nature. In this manner we think and judge; but while we thus gaze and admire, the Supreme ruler weighs in his righteous and unerring balance these supposed brilliant virtues, gives them their due degree of estimation, sees nothing in them but what is trifling, mean, and unsubstantial, full of pride and ostentation, and with the finger of truth and justice writes VANITY upon them all!

Whilst mankind are continually busied in perpetuating the power of their families; in heaping up riches; founding kingdoms; or, by unjust wars and conquests, endeavouring to eternize their names to future ages, God, who sees from everlasting to everlasting, overthrows their vain and impious projects, and from the heighth of his eternal throne, makes even their ambitious designs subservient to his own all-wise purposes, even contrary to their wishes, and the powers of their own understandings. As all ages past and to come are equally present to his view, and as the rise, progress, fate, and duration of all empires depend upon what he has assigned them, so we may be assured that nothing ever has happened, or can happen, by chance; and as the great purpose which he had in view when he created all worlds, was a moral end; and in respect to man, his own glory and the final happiness of the human race, so we may be assured, that however clouds and darkness are round about the dispen-

<sup>4</sup> Great. See Rollin, vol. 10.

sations of his providence, righteousness and justice ever have been, and will be the habitation of his throne.

The coming of the Messiah was predicted in the writings of the Jewish prophets, and the nature of his peaceable kingdom and extensive conquests plainly pointed out. Among others, Daniel in his prophetic and expressive vision saw a great image, the emblem of earthly power and dominion, with a head of gold, but of a terrible aspect: its breast and arms of silver; the belly and thighs of brass, and the legs and feet composed of heterogeneous materials so descriptive of the instability of all earthly power, iron and potters' clay! God thus thought fit to represent the four great empires of the world which had severally their rise, progress, decline and fall, previous to the coming of Christ, uniting in this great and terrible image, all that was glorious, grand, powerful, and unstable.

Let us next mark with attention the means by which this colossus was overthrown!—"I saw and beheld, and "lo! a small stone was cut out WITHOUT HANDS, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then were the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floor, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

The world has already seen in part the accomplishment of this wonderful prophecy. Christ, the long predicted Messiah, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed, descending by the flesh from the seed of David, rises like a plant out of the dry ground, undistinguished by earthly pomp, and coming in the gracious fulfilment of Heaven's designs, to establish a kingdom, not of this world, but one that shall stand forever. His work and mission are to establish a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. "He came to his own,"—the proud and foolish Jews, "but his own received him not." Despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with

grief; he hath seen of the travail of his soul which was poured out unto death, and justified many. The everlasting gospel goes forth conquering and to conquer, fulfilling the prophecy of the royal Psalmist, "The heathen shall be given him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession" till his kingdom shall, by bringing the hearts of men to a conformity with the Divine image, prevail universally, and all nations fall down

and worship him.

Clothed with human nature, Jesus Christ has established a kingdom over the minds of millions of the human race, which from the smallest beginnings, and founded in apparent weakness, continues to enlarge itself on every side. After overturning Pagan idolatry enthroned in the Capital by the side of the Cæsars; defying the rage of persecution, and the arguments of philosophy, all combined, but in vain, to destroy it in its birth, it effects a revolution in the Roman empire the most singular recorded in history. Wholly unaided by, and in direct opposition to the civil power, the banner of the cross, in the short space of three hundred vears, flies triumphant from the shores of Africa to the Baltic Sea, and from Asia Minor to the British Isles. Ancient prophecies are fully and literally accomplished; and while states and empires pass away with incredible celerity, and the human race, intent only upon the present scene, are drawn, one generation after another, into the vortex of eternity without perceiving it, God is establishing an order and disposition of things in the world, and setting up a kingdom diverse from all other kingdoms, and that shall stand for ever-

The historical part of the New Testament is contained in the four gospels, and deservedly claims our high esteem, as conveying to us the blessed tidings of our recovering that happy state forfeited by our first parents in Paradise. All those excellencies which in general belong to the Old Testament, may in a more peculiar manner be claimed by the New; for as St. Augustin says, l. 1. de Consens. Evang. c. 1. "What the law and the prophets only foretold, the gospel plainly demon-

"strates to have been completed." If therefore good and holy men under the dispensation of the law, which was but a shadow of what has since come to pass, were encouraged to undergo the severest persecutions, in hopes of a reward to come, what greater encouragement had the saints under the gospel to suffer, when the reward was gone before them? From hence the church in all ages has derived advantage; and hence the martyrs in the midst of their agonies took courage, looking up to the Author of their hope. Thus the protomartyr, St. Stephen, when stoned to death, was comforted with a sight of the Son of God. Hence the holy apostles, and the rest of our Saviour's followers, enforced the doctrines of their Lord, not from the distant relations of others, but from the more immediate dictates of his mouth, whence by a sacred and certain tradition they have been handed down to these times. From hence in times of persecution and infidelity, we are secure in the establishment of our faith, and completely furnished with arguments and instructions against the most plausible errors. From our Saviour's more immediate example, we learn humility and meekness, who, though the Son of God, condescended to the low condition of humanity. From him we learn patience in adversity, and equanimity in the most elevated state of life: and whatever blemishes by the corruptions of nature may stain our profession, his word is our rule and guide to set us right again, and restore religion to its primitive purity. For this reason our blessed Lord expressly calls himself the Light of the World; of which his holv gospel is the happy vehicle to convey it to mankind, which, till his incarnation, sat in darkness. And hence the royal prophet Isaiah, foretelling his coming, says, "The people that walked in darkness " have seen a great light, and they that dwelt in the land of "the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined, "Isa. ix. 2." Which is literally completed in the deliverance of the world by Christ, through the preaching of the gospel.

From the superior excellence, therefore, of this light which the gospel conveys to us, the Scriptures of the New Testament have acquired such reverence and vene-

ration, that the masters of the world, in the earliest ages of the church, thought them worthy their highest care and esteem. Constantine the Great, had the gospels bound up in a cover of gold, set with most valuable jewels. Theodosius the emperor, transcribed the gospels with his own hand, and spent great part of every night in reading them. The general councils of Nice, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, placed the book of the gospels in the midst of their assemblies, as Nicephorus tells us, l. 4. c. 3, and Cyril of Alexandria, who lived in the beginning of the fifth century, tells us, It was by synodical sanction ordained, that in all solemn attestations they were to lay their hand on the book of the gospels, and invoke the help of God; which solemnity is continued to this day; when any one is obliged to take an oath. Nor was this only observed among the orthodox, but when through neglect of discipline and the depravity of morals, error crept into the church, even hereticks paid the same respect to the gospels, who, though they expunged some books out of the canon of Scripture, and mutilated others, never offered by any sacrilegious attempt to touch or violate the gospels; nay, in so great an esteem were they among the heathens, that St. Augustin affirms de Civitate Dei, l. 10, c. 29, that he had seen the beginning of St. John's gospel among the writings of the Platonists. Hence theologians of all ages have deservedly, and with a general consent, styled this part of the Holy Scripture most necessary and useful; and truly, if we have repect to the subject-matter, authors, and method or manner of them, we shall see those epithets justly appropriated to the writings of the New Testament, and to the gospels particularly.

As to the subject-matter, it is from God himself; for the Evangelists fully relate to us the discourses and actions of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath clearly directed us what man is to believe, and what we are to practise; who hath set before us eternal life, and shewn us how we may certainly obtain it; who hath instructed us into the nature of faith, hope and leve; the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity, and the observation of

the holy sacraments; painting virtue to us in its most amiable aspect, and describing vice in its most horrid appearances and consequences; so that St. Jerome very aptly calls the gospels, the Compendium of Theology,

and of christian life and learning.

The author is no other than the Divine Wisdom who chiefly speaks and acts in all the grand occurrences of the gospel: for before, as the apostle to the Hebrews says, ch. i. ver. 1, 2, "God, who spake to our fathers by "the prophets, hath in these latter days spoken unto us "by his Son, whom he hath made heir of all things, and "by whom he made the world." So that not Moses or the prophets, but the only begotten Son of God, hath by the divine mind of the Father discovered to us the secrets of the eternal wisdom, and communicated them to us in the holy gospels; in which those sacred mysteries, concealed from ancient times, and barely shadowed out in the typical expressions of the law and the prophets, are

plainly manifested.

The method or manner of speaking and reasoning in the Holy Gospels is truly admirable; for the elegance of the metaphors, the aptness of the similitudes, and significancy of the parables are such, as evince their superiority to every human writer, and are worthy of the Son of God: At one time he compares himself to a king, celebrating the nuptials of his son; at another time to a great man calling his servants to an account; now to a general waging war, then to a master of a family, a husbandman, a shep. herd, a fisherman, or a merchant. In all which, the comparisons are so proper, that in the gospel we may be said to be instructed as much by the acts, as by the words of Christ: and St. Gregory observes, that every action of Christ is for our instruction; but the Evangelical History claims another excellency: for it is so disposed by the Holy Ghost, that the most simple and ignorant are not destitute of advantage in reading it; and at the same time there are depths and mysteries sufficient to exercise the powers of the greatest mind. It is indeed plain and easy to the sincere, humble, and teachable; but to the confident,

proud, and indolent, difficult and obscure. "I thank thee, says our blessed Lord to the Father, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes, Matt. xi. 25." But the excellence of the gospel will yet appear more conspicuously, if we draw a parallel between it and the law.

I. The promulgator of the law was Moses, a mere man; but the author of the gospel was Jesus Christ, both God and man. The law indeed was ordained by the ministry of angels in the hand of a mediator, who was Moses, the mediator between God and the Israelites; but Jesus Christ, the Son of God, first promulged the gospel with his own mouth. The apostle to the Hebrews, ch. i. ver. 2, &c. shews the disparity between Christ and Moses: "Christ being the brightness of his glory, and the express "image of God's person, and sustaining all things by the word of his power, sitteth at the right hand of the ma-"jesty on high; and is made so much more excellent "than they: for unto which of the angels said he "at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begot-"ten thee?" And to shew how much inferior Moses was to Christ, chap. iii. ver. 3, "He is counted worthy of " greater glory than Moses, as the builder of a house is "more honoured than the house." And ver. 5, 6, "Mo-" ses truly was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a "witness of those things which should be done hereafter; " but Christ as the Son of God in his own house." The angels indeed, as ministering spirits, were the first publishers of the gospel, in the messages of Gabriel the archangel to the Virgin Mary, and to Zacharias, the father of John Baptist; but Christ himself was the founder of it: wherefore he clothed his divinity with our flesh, through which he dictated to us the words of his gospel. "The law, says St. John, "chap. i. ver. 17, was "given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus "Christ." So that all authorities both of the Old and New Testament do agree, that Christ being the author of the gospel, it is justly entitled his gospel, and may not be improperly called the Book of Christ, in which

with his own mouth he declared more noble and sublime truths than Moses and the prophets. Wherefore when we read or hear the holy gospel, we may be said to read or hear the very express word of the Son of God himself; which thought, in the most early ages of christianity, created such an awe and reverence in all the faithful, that when the gospel was read in the church, the whole congregation rose up in profound respect to it.

But to carry the parallel yet higher, the doctrine of the gospel far exceeds what we find in Moses and the law. The law proposes one God to be believed and worshipped by us; but the gospel, one God in essence, and three in person-to be loved and adored : \* "Go, says our Lord, "and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of "the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Matt. xxviii. 19." The prophets foretold the birth, life, passion, and ascension of Christ; the mission of the Holy Ghost, the recovery and conversion of the Gentiles: but the gospel far more clearly declares the prescience, providence, omnipotence, and infinite love of God. "No man hath seen "God at any time, but the only begotten Son, who is in "the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," saith St. John, ch. i. ver. 18. That is, Christ leaving his immortal state for a while, condescended to the condition of mortality, that he might discover to us the secrets of the Father, which were known to him alone. For which cause, St. Paul in his instructions to Timothy, Epist. i. c. 3, ver. 16, says, "Great is the mystery of godliness; "God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, " seen of angels, preached to the world, and received up " into glory."

Moreover, the law is as the shadow; but the gospel, the body, and very truth itself. Thus the acts of the patriarchs, the oracles, and all the visions of the prophets; the sacrifices, ceremonies and decrees of the law, which received their sanction, by the blood of animals, were

<sup>\*</sup> Adored. We must nevertheless admit that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity was not unknown to the ancient believers.

types and preludes, which emblematically represented Christ to the people: but the gospel manifestly and clearly exhibits to us Christ, his doctrines, and sacraments. This St. Paul, 2 Cor. iii. 18, positively affirms, "We be hold the glory of the Lord with an open face, and are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." And in confirmation of this, the same apostle begins his epistle to the Romans thus: Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which he had promised before by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures con-

Gerning his Son Jesus Christ."

the gospel, of peace and love. The one threatening death to the transgressors, the other promising rewards to believers. By the law all were servants, but by the gospel all are freemen and children. So St. Paul, 2 Cor. iii. 6, "God hath made us able ministers of the New Tes- tament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. For if the ministra- tion of death, (that is, the law threatening death) written with letters, and in stones, was glorious, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be more glorious?" From whence we may justly define the gospel a law of liberty, a law of the Spirit, a law of beneficence and charity: for Christ "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him," Acts x. 38.

HI. The promises of the law were temporary; but the gospel-promises are celestial and eternal. In the law were promised the good things of the earth, as plenty of oil, wine, honey, and cattle; but in the gospel the vision and enjoyment of God, and everlasting happiness. Joshua conducted the Israelites to a land flowing with milk and honey, but it was to the land of the dying; Christ hath brought us into the land of the living, a land abounding with grace and glory. Besides, the law was more burdensome than the gospel in respect of its three-fold division into moral, ceremonial, and judicial, many parts of which decreed death to the transgressors of them:

but the obligations which the gospel lays upon the professors of it are easy and pleasant; "Come to me, says our blessed Saviour, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light, Mat. xi. 28, 29, 30, &c."

IV. The law was an introduction to Christ and the gospel; but the gospel is the end of the law; as St. Paul tells us, Rom. x. 4, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth." Wherefore St. Bernard very aptly calls Christ, The fruit of the promises of the law, alluding to the seminal virtue of plants; for fruit, says he, Hom. i. is the end to which seeds tend, and

in which they terminate.

V. But the superior excellence of the gospel will yet appear much greater, if we consider the imperfection of the law, as it was limited to the Jews; while the gospel is to be diffused over all the world, see Isaiah, ch. xlix. v. 6, "Behold I have given thee for a light to the Gen-"tiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of "the earth." The law was likewise imperfect in respect of its duration; for it was only temporary, being intended to continue no longer than till the introduction of the gospel, which the apostle to the Hebrews, ch. vii. ver. 18, affirms, "For there is verily a disannulling of the "commandment going before for the weakness and "unprofitableness thereof; for the law made nothing "perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, "by which we draw nigh unto God; but this is made "with an oath by him that said, Thou art a priest " for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Indeed, if we consider the whole texture and plan of the gospel, we shall find it contrived, and adapted to all ages and sexes, to all degrees and conditions, and it may justly be called an universal library of wisdom and knowledge, wherein every one may see his duty, and learn to put it in practice. If we examine our Saviour's conduct while on earth, we shall plainly see that his whole life was a continued series of moral excellence; and that what he taught to others, Vol. If.  $\mathbf{C}$  c

he himself practised, enforcing his precepts by his own example. While the world greedily sought after wealth, he studiously avoided it. While others ambitiously aspired to honour and empire, he declined a kingdom. Impatient man could brook no affront, but he sustained the vilest reproach. Corporal pains were terrible to human nature, yet he bore whipping and scourging. Nothing so shocking to mortality as the bare apprehension of dissolution, yet he submitted to the most ignominious and painful death, even that of the cross.

But besides the imperfections of the law already mentioned, St. Paul in his epistle to the Galatians, ch. iv. ver. 3, shews us farther, "That when we were children, "we were under the elements of the world; but when the "fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, and made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." And St. Cyril, l. 9, in Joan. says, "It was necessary that Moses should instruct Israel as a child in their state of ignorant infancy; but by Christ, who is the sacred repository of wisdom, we arrive at the most true and consummate knowledge."

The perfection of Christ's character is another consideration which stamps a peculiar excellence on the New Testament. A representation is given of one entirely free from every error and every sin, -of one who is perfectly wise and perfectly good. This character is not pourtrayed in a few brilliant passages at the end of the gospels: it rises out of the whole of the history of his life and death. Jesus is presented in many, and in different situations. He is introduced speaking on an infinite variety of subjects; he converses familiarly with his friends; he discourses to the multitude; he replies to the cavils of his enemies. He is displayed both in active employments and in sufferings: but not one word is contrary to the dictates of wisdom; not one action contrary to the rules of rectitude. He is often thrown into the most trying circumstances; and sudden and ensnaring questions are frequently put to him: but-his consummate prudence shines forth in his answers, and in his conduct; and none

can accuse him of folly or of sin. In his most bitter sufferings, from the hands of his Father, and of the Jews, there is neither murmuring against God, nor hatred and revenge, nor reviling of man.—But he does not rest in negative virtue: he is all resignation to the will of God. His treatment of Judas, when betrayed, and about to be delivered up; his behaviour before Pilate; his words to the daughters of Jerusalem, when they wept at his sufferings; and his prayer on the cross for his enemies, all manifest the highest and purest efforts of goodness. No one evil passion shews itself in the slightest degree; even in an unbecoming word. No ignorance, no error, nor imprudence; all is truth, and all is wisdom. Enthusiasm and superstition have no place in this wondrous personage. There is from first to last a full display of perfect rectitude and perfect goodness.

He is not only called, the Son of Man, but, the Son God; and there is added, to the perfection of a man, the elevation becoming "the Word, who was in the beginning with God, and who was God, by whom all things were made:" nor do we search for it in vain. Along with the most amiable condescension that ever adorned human nature, there is united an uniform dignity of sentiment and conduct becoming his exalted rank, as the Son of God. Jesus speaks with authority; he promises with a consciousness of his power; he confers blessings as one who has a right to bestow. In every thing, and place, and time, he preserves, without the remotest semblance of pride or assuming arrogance, the tone of a master, and the dignified deportment of one who "came down from heaven to give life unto the world; "and who was the only begotten of the Father, full of grace

After all these excellencies of the Gospels, there can be no motive so pressing to incite us to the study of them, as their own intrinsic worth; and next to that, our interest, which we cannot be said more truly to pursue, than by a firm belief of their testimony, and a religious observance of their precepts.

" and truth."

And here it will not be improper to give some account

of the writers of this history; which, though penned by four several persons, and at four different times and places, preserve such a harmony throughout the whole narration, as plainly evinces, that none but men inspired by the Holy Ghost could so punctually agree in their writings. We will begin with St. Matthew, who is first in order, and whose gospel\* stands first in the New Testament.

St. Matthew, called also Levi, was born at Nazareth, a city in the tribe of Zebulun, and was the son of Alpheus and Mary; the latter was sister or kinswoman to the blessed Virgin, and both were originally descended of the tribe of Issachar. His employment, or way of life, was that of a publican, or tax-gatherer to the Romans, an office of bad report among the Jews, though among the Romans it was accounted a place of power and credit, not ordinarily conferred upon any but Roman knights. This office was rendered very odious to the Jews, by the covetousness and extortion of the collectors, who having farmed the customs of the Romans, they must use all manner of extortion, to pay their rent, and gain some advantage to themselves: of which, doubtless, Zaccheus, the chief of these farmers, was sensible, when, after his conversion, he offered a four-fold restitution to any man, from whom he had taken any thing by fraud or evil arts.

Of this occupation was St. Matthew, which, it seems, more particularly consisted in gathering the customs on commodities that came by the sea of Galilee, and the tribute which passengers were obliged to pay who went by water. For this purpose they kept their office, or customhouse, by the sea-side, that they might be always near at hand. And here it was, as St. Mark intimates, that Mat-

<sup>\*</sup> Gospel. Gospel is a Saxon word; Gos with them signifying Good, as well as God, and Spel means a Word: so that this term agrees exactly with the Greek word Euangelian, which signifies good news or a good message. In this place it denotes the history of the birth, life, actions, precepts and promises, death and resurrection of Christ, which all Christians should contemplate with infinite joy and thankfulness.

thew had his station, where he sat at the receipt of custom, when our Lord saw, and called him to follow him. He had a lucrative business, was wise and prudent, and understood, no doubt, what it would cost him to comply with this new employment, that he must exchange wealth for poverty, a custom-house for a prison, and gainful masters for a poor and despised Saviour. But he disregarded all these considerations, and forsook his interests and relations to become Christ's disciple, and to embrace a more spiritual employment.\*

After his call to be an apostle, he continued with the rest of the disciples, till our Lord's ascension; and then, for the first eight years afterward, preached in and about Judea. Little certainty can be had what journies he undertook, for the advancement of the Christian faith, so irrecoverably is truth lost in a crowd of legendary stories. Æthiopia is generally assigned as the province of his apostolical ministry, where, it is most probable, that he suffered martyrdom in a city called Naddabar, but by what kind of death is uncertain.

St. Matthew wrote his gospel, as is commonly supposed, at the intreaty of the Jewish converts, and of the apostles, while he was yet in Palestine, about eight years after the death of Christ: which, notwithstanding the opinion of Nicephorus and Irenæus, to the contrary, carries a great appearance of probability, from its being written before the dispersion of the apostles; for St. Bartholomew took it with him when he travelled into India, where it was afterwards found by Pantæus, amongst some that yet retained the knowledge of Christ. As to the language, he undoubtedly

<sup>\*</sup> Employment. St. Gregory observes, that St. Matthew did not return to his former lucrative occupation, though some of the other apostles resumed their business as fishermen before our Saviour's ascension. See John, ch. xxi. ver. 3. Some callings, he adds, are in themselves-innocent, others which can scarcely be exercised without sin. The corrupt, insolent, and covetous practices of the publicans or tax-gatherers, had brought their characters into universal detestation; and had Matthew returned to his former profession, he would have been in danger of yielding to those temptations to which he must have been perpetually exposed.

wrote it in Hebrew, as primarily designing it for the use of his countrymen. It was very likely soon after translated into Greek, though by whom, is not certainly known; some say by St. John, others by St. James the less. But it matters not much by which of them it was done, since the apostles approved the version, and the church has ever since received the Greek copy as authentic.

There is no certainty as to what became of the original Hebrew, or whether the copy of it which Pantæus brought from India, was deposited in the city of Alexandria, and there kept till the time of St. Jerome, who says that he had

seen it.

Saint Mark was of the tribe of Levi, and descended from Jewish ancestors. By the ancients he was generally esteemed to be one of the seventy disciples of our blessed Saviour; and Eusebius says, that he was sent by St. Peter to preach the gospel in Egypt; and in Alexandria, the metropolis of the country, he established a Christian church. He converted great multitudes of both sexes; and his preaching was attended with such remarkable success, that the people not only embraced the Christian faith, but also conformed more strictly to a holy life and conduct.

Having preached in several of the eastern parts of Egypt, he travelled westward to Libya, passing through Marmarica, Pentapolis, and other neighbouring countries, inhabited by barbarous and idolatrous people; but by his preaching and miracles he prevailed upon them to embrace christianity, and confirmed them in the faith.

Returning to Alexandria, he preached the gospel with great freedom and boldness, and constituted suitable officers of the church; but while industriously labouring in the vineyard of his great Master, his progress in his holy

avocation was interrupted by the idolatrous people.

About Easter, when they were celebrating the solemnities of Serapis, their principal idol, the multitude tumultuously entering the church, seized St. Mark, and having bound his feet with cords, cruelly dragged him through the streets, and over the most craggy places, to the Bucelus, a precipice near the sea, where they confined

him in a lonesome prison. Tradition says, during the night, his great and beloved Master appeared to him in a vision, and comforted him under his afflictions, encouraging him to submit to his fate with Christian magnanimity and fortitude.

On the following morning the populace renewed their barbarity, dragging him about the streets till he expired. After this horrid murder, they wantonly mangled, and then burnt the body of the deceased. This abominable act of cruelty being perpetrated, the Christians carefully collected his bones and ashes, and buried them near the place where he had been accustomed to preach. The remains of this evangelist was afterwards removed from Alexandria with great funeral pomp, and conveyed to Venice, where they were superstitiously honoured. He suffered martyrdom on the fifteenth of April, but in what year is uncertain; though from circumstances it appears probable that it happened towards the conclusion of the reign of Nero.

His gospel was written, it is said, at the earnest entreaty of the converts at Rome. Not content with having heard the discourses of St. Peter, they solicited St. Mark, his disciple, to commit to writing a narrative of what that apostle had delivered to them. This task was undertaken with cheerfulness, and executed with remarkable success. The work being approved by St. Peter, it was commanded to be publickly read in the Christian assemblies.

The original Greek copy of St. Mark's gospel was reported to have been in the possession of the Venetians, but is now most probably in Paris, and is pretended to have been written by the evangelist at Aquileia, and thence removed to Venice, after many ages; but the letters are so worn out that they cannot be read, and the whole story appears to be a forgery: but that his gospel was composed at Rome, and at the intreaty of the Christians there, is the unanimous tradition of the ancients, such as Papias, Irenæus, Clemens, Tertullian, and others; as also that it was perused by St. Peter, and ratified by his authority. Only Irenæus intimates, that it was written after St. Peter's death; and Dr. Cave seems to believe,

that in his life-time he only furnished the evangelist with materials, and gave him directions for putting them together as we now have them; but that the work was not actually composed till after the apostle's death. Clemens Alexandrinus is of opinion, that he composed it out of those discourses which St. Peter usually delivered to his auditors. It was anciently styled St. Peter's gospel; and St. Chrysostom observes, that the style and manner of expression is like that in his epistles, containing much in a few words.

Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, was the birth-place of St. Luke, a city envinent above all others in Syria, for its pleasant situation, and fertile soil; riches, wisdom, and learning, and for the politeness of its inhabitants; above all these, renowned for the peculiar honour, that here the disciples were first called Christians. Being an university abounding with learned professors of all arts and sciences, St. Luke could not fail of a liberal education, his natural parts meeting with the advantage of great improvements. Nor did he only study at Antioch, but in all the schools of Greece and Egypt, whereby he became accomplished in all parts of learning. He applied himself particularly to the study of physic, for which the Greek academies were most famous. But it does not hence follow that he was a man distinguished either for his birth or fortune; for, in the early ages, the healing art was generally practised by domestics, or persons in a dependent situation; Grotius is therefore of opinion that St. Luke went to Rome, and lived there in quality of a physician to some noble family; and that, after obtaining his freedom, he returned to his own country, and there continued to pursue the practice of physic.

He is also said to have acquired great reputation by his skill in painting; and an ancient inscription found in a vault near the church of St. Maria de Via lata at Rome, supposed to be the place where St. Luke resided, a picture of the blessed Virgin is mentioned, being one of the

seven painted by St. Luke.

The Acts were written, no doubt, at Rome. In the dedication of this Book to Theophilus, it appears that it

was composed after his gospel; and from the conclusion we may gather, that he finished it at the end of St. Paul's two years' imprisonment: though we may well take it for granted, that he committed to writing the several facts all along at the times when they happened, having himself been an eye-witness of them. In this history, he not only relates the actions, but also the sufferings, of some of the chief apostles, and of St. Paul especially; of whose trials and most intimate transactions, he was best able to give a true account, having been his constant attendant; and, among other things, he enlarges particularly upon the great miracles wrought by the apostles, as being the grand confirmation of the truth of Christ's resurrection.

It is most probable that he was converted by St. Paul, during his abode at Antioch; after which he became his inseparable companion and fellow-labourer in the ministry of the Gospel, especially after his going into Macedonia, from which time in recording the history of St. Paul's travels he always speaks of himself in his own person, Acts xvi. 10. He followed him in all his dangers, was with him at several arraignments at Jerusalem, accompanied him in his desperate voyage to Rome, where he still attended on him to serve his necessities, and supply those offices which the apostle's confinement would not suffer him to undertake, and especially in carrying messages to the churches wherein he had planted christianity. This infinitely endeared him to St. Paul, who owned him for his fellow-labourer, and calls him the beloved physician, and the brother whose praise is in the gospel, throughout all the churches.

St. Luke wrote two books for the use of the church; his gospel and history of the apostles' acts, both which he dedicated to Theophilus. The ancients differ much about this Theophilus, some supposing it to be a feigned name, denoting no more than a Lover of God, a title common to every real Christian, while others, with better reason, conclude it was the proper name of a particular person, especially since the style of Most Excellent is attributed to him, the usual form of address to princes and great men: but even they that agree in this,

cannot determine positively who he was. It is most probable he was some magistrate, whom St. Luke had converted and baptized, to whom he now dedicated these books, not only as a testimony of honourable respect, but as a means of giving him farther certainty and assurance of those things wherein he had been instructed by him. St. Jerome supposes his gospel to have been written in Achaia, during his travels with St. Paul in Greece, of whose help he is generally said to have made use in composing it. But whatever assistance St. Paul might contribute towards it, we are sure, as this evangelist himself informs us, That he derived his intelligence from those who from the beginning had been eye-witnesses of the facts, and ministers of the word, Luke i. 2. Nor does it in the least detract from the authority of his history, that he himself was not a spectator of all the events; for, if we consider who they were from whom he derived his information, he had a stock both of credit and intelligence sufficiently authentic to proceed upon, delivering nothing in his whole history, but what he had immediately received from persons present at, and concerned in the things which he has left upon record.

The ancients are not very well agreed either about the time or manner of his death. Nazianzen and others expressly assert his martyrdom, of which Nicephorus gives a particular account; that coming into Greece he successfully preached the gospel, and baptized many converts into the Christian faith, till a party of infidels seizing upon him, drew him to execution, and for want of a cross whereon to dispatch him immediately, hanged him upon an olive tree, in the eightieth year of his age. His body afterwards, by the command of Constantine, or his son Constantius, was solemnly removed to Constantinople, and buried in the great Church erected to the memory of

the apostles.

St. John, though the last in order, yet first in reputation, of the evangelists, was by birth a Galilean, the son of Zebedee and Salome, younger brother to St. James, with whom he was brought up in the business of fishing. The nobility of his family, which some attribute to him, seems not reconcileable with the meanness of his father's trade,

and the smallness of his fortunes. Before his coming to Christ, he seems for some time to have been a disciple to John the Baptist, being probably that other disciple that was with Andrew, when they left the Baptist to follow our Saviour; so particularly does he relate all circumstances of that transaction, though modestly, as in other parts of his gospel, concealing his own name. He was at the same time with his brother called by our Lord to be both disciple and apostle; and was by much the youngest of all the apostles, which his great age seems to evince, having lived

near seventy years after our Saviour's ascension.

The sacred story says little more than what is recorded of him in conjunction with his brother James. He was peculiarly dear to his Lord and Master, being treated by him with more familiarity and indulgence than the rest; and he was not only one of the three, to whom our Saviour communicated the private passages of his life, but had some instances of a more particular kindness and fayour conferred upon him. At the last supper he lay on our Lord's bosom, it being the custom of those early times to lie along at meals upon couches, so that the second lay with his head in the bosom of him that was before him; which honour was not given to any of the aged, but reserved for this young apostle. And besides other marks of distinction, during the ministry of our blessed Lord, he made him, when on the cross, guardian of his mother, the blessed Virgin, committing her to his particular care, John xix. 26, 27.

Upon the division of provinces, which the apostles made among themselves, Asia fell to St. John, though it is not probable that he immediately entered upon his charge, but dwelt in his own house at Jerusalem, at least till the death of the blessed Virgin, which was about fifteen years after our Lord's ascension. Some time after her death he took his journey into Asia, and industriously applied himself to propagate Christianity, preaching where the gospel had not yet been introduced, and confirming it where it was already planted; St. Paul having before made several journeys into, and resided in those parts. Many churches of note were of his founding, Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and others; but his

chief place of residence was Ephesus, where St. Paul had many years before settled a church, and constituted Timo-

thy its first Pastor.

After several years spent in this employment, he was at length accused to Domitian, who had begun a persecution against the Christians, as an eminent asserter of atheism and impiety, and a public subverter of the religion of the empire. By his command the proconsul of Asia sent him bound to Rome, where, it is said, he was cast into a caldron of oil set on fire. But Divine Providence preserved him from this seemingly unavoidable destruction. The cruel emperor not convinced or satisfied, ordered him to be banished to Patmos, a desolate island in the Archipelago, where he remained several years, and there wrote his book of the Revelations.

Domitian, whose prodigious wickedness had rendered him burdensome to the world, being taken out of the way, · Cocceius Nerva succeeded to the empire, a prudent man, and of a mild and sedate temper. He rescinded the odious acts of his predecessor, and by a public edict recalled those whom the fury of Domitian had banished. St. John taking advantage of this general indulgence, left Patmos, and returned to his ancient charge in Asia, but chiefly fixed his seat at Ephesus, the care and presidency of which (Timothy their bishop having been lately martyred by the people) he took upon him, and by the assistance of seven bishops he regulated that large diocese, erecting oratories (not large and splendid churches) and ordering and disposing their affairs as circumstances required. He lived till the time of Trajan, about the beginning of whose reign he departed this life, very aged, being in the ninety-eighth or ninety-ninth year of his life. There are many improbable opinions and conjectures about the manner of his death, most of which, relating to his dying a violent death, are very frivolous and trifling: the most probable is, that he died a natural death, in a good old age, ...

He was indefatigable in the discharge of his important duty, which he expressed in his care to the souls of men, unweariedly spending himself in the service of the gospel, travelling from east to west to instruct the world in the principles of that holy religion which he was sent to propagate, shunning no difficulties or dangers to convert mankind from error and idolatry, and save them from a vicious life. He was a vigilant and courageous champion against heretics, countermining their artifices, and confirming

Christians against their poisonous errors.

St. John wrote his gospel after his return from Patmos to Ephesus, and, as it is said, at the intreaty and solicitation of the Asian bishops, and ambassadors from several churches. In order to which he caused them to proclaim a fast, to seek the blessing of heaven on so great and solemn an undertaking; which being done he commenced the work. Two things chiefly occasioned its being written; the one was to obviate the heresies of those times, especially those of Ebion and Cerinthus, who denied Christ's divinity; the other, that he might supply those passages of the Evangelical History, which the rest of the sacred writers had omitted. Besides these he wrote three epistles; the first of which is catholic, or general, calculated for all times and places, containing most excellent rules for the conduct of Christian life, pressing to holiness and purity of manners, and arming men against the insinuations of seducers, especially the Gnosticks, to whom St. John had a particular respect in this epistle. It was universally received, and never questioned by any. The other two epistles are but short, and directed to particular persons; the one to a lady of honourable quality; the other to the charitable and hospitable Gaius, the kind friend and courteous entertainer of indigent Christians. These epistles were not of old admitted into the canon, nor are they owned by the church in Syria to this day, being by many ascribed to the younger John, disciple to our apostle. But there is no just cause to question who was the author, since both the doctrine, phrase, and design of them sufficiently challenge our apostle for their author.

St. John wrote his works in Greek: but his Gospel was afterwards translated into Hebrew, and kept by the Jews among their secret archives and records in their treasury at Tiberias, where a copy of it was found by one Joseph a Jew, afterwards converted, and whom Constantine the Great advanced to the honour of a count of the empire; who breaking open the treasury, though he missed of money, found books

beyond all treasure, St. Matthew's and St. John's Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles in Hebrew, the reading of

which greatly contributed to his conversion.

Thus much of each evangelist in particular: that which is generally observable of the writings of these four excellent persons is this; That the three first of them wrote the whole story from the birth of Christ, till after the resurrection; but two of them more largely, St. Matthew and St. Luke; the third (St. Mark) more succinctly relating the series of the actions rather than the sermons and passages delivered by him. And though none of them agree throughout in observing the order and succession of the matters which they record, yet two of them agree much more constantly than the third with either of them, viz. St. Matthew an apostle and eve-witness, and St. Mark from St. Peter, who also was an apostle and eye-witness: but the third, St. Luke, who compiled his story from collections that he made from others, hath not so exactly observed the order wherein the facts took place, but only set And though he sometimes down the facts themselves. varied from the others in some words or circumstances, fas when St. Matthew and St. Mark say it was a Maid that spake to St. Peter, he reads, another Man, and the like) they are so inconsiderable, and of so little importance to the main matters of faith, and doctrines of the gospel, that they are rather arguments to demonstrate that these writings were not contrived by any compact or agreement of one with another, but that each of them wrote separately, without consulting or knowing what the other had done; which is a circumstance that was necessary to make their testimonies distinct, and so to give them the greater authority from their number. As to the fourth evangelist, St. John, his writings seem to have been designed to these two ends: 1. To demonstrate and declare the divinity and eternal pre-existence of Christ, his creation of the world, with other sublime and 'mysterious truths; as the other three had described his humanity, and cleared the matter of his conception and birth of the blessed Virgin. add out of his own knowledge some remarkable things, (especially those which tended most to the divinity of Christ) which had been omitted by the other three: to

which purpose he saw it necessary to set down the story of Christ's passion and resurrection as the others had done, that so he might affix those other circumstances which he

designed to add to them.

There are some that find fault with his style, as being often mixed with barbarisms, and phrases used in an uncommon sense, making his writings less grateful to the critical and curious. But whatever was wanting in the politeness and elegance of his style, was abundantly supplied in the zeal of his temper, and the excellency and sublimity of his matter; so that as St. Basil and Epiphanius assert of him, he spake and wrote like "a son of thunder."

The appointed time was now approaching, when the great Creator of the World, intending to restore mankind from that wretched state, into which they were plunged by the apostacy of our first parents, resolved to perform the promises made to the fathers, by sending his Son\* to redeem them.

In pursuance of this grand design, he first sent his messenger† to prepare the way before the Saviour of the World, who was now about to make his public entry into it; and to render the fulfilment of the prophecies concerning him the more illustrious, and worthy of an Almighty hand, the conception and birth of John Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, was introduced with a stupendous miracle: God hereby not only denoting his omnipotence, which is not circumscribed within the scanty bounds of Nature, but at the same time exciting the minds of men

<sup>\*</sup> Son. Jesus was the proper name of the word made Flesh, and given by God himself, Mat. i. 21. Luke i. 31, and ii. 21. Not that it was a name strange or unusual at that time, but more emphatically given him as Saviour of the World; the reason of which is by the heavenly ambassador subjoined in Matthew i. 21, "For he shall save his people from their sins."

Christ is a name of dignity, signifying his office as Messiah, or the anointed; for under the old law, kings, priests, and prophets, were anointed, 1 Sam. x. 1. 1 Kings i. 39. Levit. viii. 12. 1 Kings, xix. 16, And that this was a name peculiar to the expected Messiah of the Jews, is evident from the High-priest's calling him the Christ, Mat. xxvi. 63. Mark xiv 61. Luke xxii. 67.

<sup>†</sup> Messenger. See Isaiah xl. 3. Mal. iii. I.

to the expectation of something extraordinary from such

preternatural means.

In the reign of Herod, king of Judea, lived a certain priest named Zacharias, and his wife Elizabeth; both of the tribe of Levi, but by a peculiar descent; he being of the lot of Abiah,\* which was the eighth, according to the division of David, and she lineally descended from the daughters of Aaron. Nor was their character inferior to the excellency of their extraction, being just † before God, and unblameable in their conversation. Yet hitherto God had favoured them with no issue, and being both far advanced in years, they had now no reason to expect any. God, contrary to all the seeming improbabilities of Nature, had determined to make them instruments of his glory, by manifesting on them his omnipotent power in an extraordinary manner.

At the time when Zacharias was to officiate in his course, and to burn incense in the temple, the angel Gabriel appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar. The peculiarity of the sight struck Zacharias with surprise and fear, which the angel soon dispelled, by assuring him of the favour which he and his wife had found with God; who, notwithstanding their great age, intended to bless them with a son, whose birth should be the occasion of great joy not only to themselves but to many others; foretelling at the same time the dignity of his office.—That being from his birth inspired with the Holy Ghost, he should go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the children of Israel, and make

<sup>\*</sup> Abiah. 1 Chron. xxiv. 10. + Just. Luke i. 6.

<sup>‡</sup> Altar. As the daily sacrifice represented the sacrifice of Christ, and the incense the prayers of the saints, Rev. viii. 1, 4, the incense was ordered to be burnt while the sacrifice was offering, to teach mankind that it was through the sacrifice of Christ they had access to the Deity. Accordingly the sacrifices and incense, both morning and evening, were fitly accompanied with the prayers of the people, and that not in the temple only, but every where else, pious men choosing to put up their supplications at the hours of sacrifice, while the ministers of religion interceded for the nation. Hence these hours were called the hours of prayer, Acts iii. 1.

ready a people prepared for the Lord. Zacharias, by reason of his own and his wife's great age, questions the truth of the divine message: but the angel, to confirm the authority of his embassy, tells the diffident priest, that he should be dumb till these things were fulfilled; which immediately happened, for when he came out of the temple he was speechless, and continued so till the time of his wife's delivery.

Zacharias's time of waiting being expired, he returns home, where, soon after, his wife Elizabeth conceived, which for five months she concealed, not that she doubted of the promise God had made to her by the angel; for she well knew her husband's incredulity was punished with loss of speech, but to avoid the rumours \* that her being with child might occasion, whom the world, by reason of her great age, might naturally suppose to be barren.

God having thus miraculously removed from Elizabeth the reproach of barrenness in her old age, by her conception of the Baptist, the birth of the Messiah is ushered into the world by no less wonderful, but rather more extraordinary means. For a woman generally esteemed barren, and in years, to bear a child was within the verge of possibility. Sacred History affords instances in the birth of Isaac and Samson: but that a virgin, who had never known man, should conceive and bear a child, exceeded all natural reason, and could be nothing but the product of divine power. This the Almighty had promised,† and now most punctually performed; for, within six months after Elizabeth had conceived, the angel Gabriel, who to her had been the happy messenger of glad tidings, is sent by God on the same errand to a virgin named Mary, a cousin of Elizabeth in Nazareth, a city of Galilee, who not long before was espoused to Joseph; and both of them were of the house of David. The angel entering the house where she then was, (for as yet she was not brought home to her espoused husband Joseph) salutes her with the heavenly benediction: "Hail thou that art

<sup>\*</sup> Rumours. Grot. Luc. Brug. Marlorat, &c.

<sup>+</sup> Promised. Isa. vii. 14. ‡ Hail. Luke i. 28.

"highly in favour with God, the Lord is with thee; bles"sed art thou among women." This glorious vision affected her with amazement and surprise; which Gabriel
soon removes by assuring her of the favour that she had
found with God, who had appointed her to be the mother
of the Saviour of the world.

The holy Virgin, in confidence of her own virtue, objects to the celestial messenger the impossibility of the event which he predicted; but he removes her doubts by assuring her that the Holy Ghost, by his Almighty influence, should cause her to conceive; and by her cousin Elizabeth's miraculously being pregnant in her old age, he convinces her of the omnipotence of God, with whom nothing\* is impossible. The blessed Virgin humbly acquiesces in the reasons of the divine visitor: upon which he leaves her, and she with eager haste repaired to Hebron, where her cousin Elizabeth dwelt, not out of any distrust of the angel's report, but that she might not neglect the opportunity of strengthening her faith in that prediction which she had thus received from God by the angel. Being arrived at the house of Zacharias, she had no sooner saluted Elizabeth, than the babe in her womb sprang as it were with joy—a motion which is to be ascribed, not to a common, but a supernatural cause.

In this visit of the Virgin Mary to Elizabeth, we may observe a most exact harmony, and which can no where be found or expected, but in such extraordinary transactions. Elizabeth had no sooner received the blessed Virgin's compliment, but, being influenced by the Holy Ghost, in return she accosted her with the very words in which the angel Gabriel had before saluted her "Blessed art thou among women;" and as if she had been acquainted with the whole conversation between the angel and her virgin-cousin, she declares her being with child of the Messiah and wills her the "Mathemathen Land".

siah, and calls her the "Mother of her Lord."

<sup>\*</sup> Nothing. The vulgar Latin translates it Word, because the Greek term Logos does often so signify; but since it answers to the Hebrew word Debhar, which is very equivocal, and signifies sometimes a word, sometimes a thing, sometimes a reason, &c. we must necessarily determine its signification according to the matter which is spoken of.

This was a most complete and demonstrable confirmation of all that the angel had foretold her, and to the knowledge of which Elizabeth could no way come but by divine inspiration: which so transported the blessed Virgin, that in a heavenly cestacy she glorified God, by recollecting his mercies, and the promises he had made to his people Israel, and which by making her the blessed instrument, he was now about to fulfil.

Having tarried about three months with her cousin, she returned home; soon after which Elizabeth, according to the time foretold, was delivered of a son, whom, on the eighth day, at his circumcision, to the amazement of their friends and kindred, the father named John,\* though none of their family had borne that name before. Hereupon good old Zacharias, seeing the finger of God so manifestly appear according to the predictions relating to his family, burst into a holy rapture; the same power that at first had miraculously bound his tongue, did now as wonderfully loosen it, to give praise to the Almighty God who had wrought such prodigies among them.

And now the time was at hand, when the great joy that the birth of the baptist had occasioned, should be augmented by the more miraculous birth of the Saviour of the world, which was to be the perfect completion of what the angel Gabriel had promised to both their mothers. The Holy Virgin therefore having returned from Hebron to Nazareth; Joseph prepares to consummate his marriage with his espoused wife; when, to his great amazement, she was observed to be advanced in a state of pregnancy. Though the seeming disappointment deeply affected him, yet being of a gentle† disposition, he was unwilling

<sup>\*</sup> John. In the Hebrew language this name signifies The grace of God; and it was fitly given the fore-runner of the Messiah, who came to establish the kingdom of righteousness.

<sup>†</sup> Gentle or merciful, &c. This in our translation is rendered just, Mat. i. 19; but words which signify Just and Justice in the Hebrew, frequently signify also Merciful and Mercy. The design therefore of the author who employs them, determines their signification. It cannot then be said, that St. Matthew designed to represent Joseph as a man who observed the most exact rules of justice, since,

to expose the honour of the family, which he conceived she had stained, or her to inevitable death, according to the sentence of the law: and therefore the better to conceal the disgrace of the family, as he thought, he resolves to divorce her privately. But while he laboured under these anxious deliberations, an angel of God appeared to him in a dream, and with this comfortable message dispels his uneasy cares: Fear not, Joseph, thou son of David, to take Mary thy wife; for she is innocent, and that which she has conceived is of the Holy Ghost, by the virtue and power of the Most High: and she shall bring forth a son, whose name by the heavenly decree is to be called Jesus, who shall free mankind from the slavery of sin and death. Joseph awaking, acknowledges the heavenly vision; and in obedience to the divine command, takes the sacred Virgin home, with whom to outward appearance he lived in conjugal love, though he knew her not till she was delivered of her first-born son\*; which soon after came to pass in as wonderful a manner as had been predicted. †

according to the law, instead of putting the blessed Virgin away, he should have made her a public example, and had her stoned to death, Deut. xxii. 23. The word therefore should have been rendered Humane or Merciful, as St. Chrysostom has remarked.

<sup>\*</sup> First-born Son. The word First-born is ambiguous: for, 1st, Sometimes it signifies one that is first-born, without respect to any following children, as when Christ is called the first-born of Mary, in Mat. i. 25. 2dly, Sometimes it signifies the eldest of two or more brethren, as when the Scripture calls Eliab the first-born of Jesse, 1. Sam. xvii. 13. 3dly. This word is taken figuratively to signify those we dearly love, because parents frequently love Heir first-born best; as in the example of Isaac with respect to Esau and of Joseph to Manasseh: and God himself calls the Israelites the first-born, which, to avoid ambiguity, might have been translated, "That God gave to the Israelites marks of the most tender affection." 4thly, The first-born signifies that which is most remarkable either for greatness and excellency, or meanness and want; as when God calls the Ephraimites his first-born, and when Moses prophecies of the tribe of Joseph, that his glory should be like the firstlings of his bullocks; that is, equal in strength to the strongest of those animals. So God promises to David, or Solomon, to make him the first-born of the kings of the earth; whereas, in respect to their birth, both were younger brothers of their family. On the contrary, when the Scripture speaks of extreme misery or want, it expresses them by the first-born of the dead, and the first-born of the poor; that is to say, persons exposed to the most cruck death, and to the deepest poverty.

In the time of Augustus Cæsar a decree\* was issued to take an account of the estates of all the countries and people subject to the Roman empire; and Cyrenius being governor of Syria, (in which province Palestine was included) he was to enrol† that part of the empire. In consequence of which, every one repairs to his own city to have his name registered, and his goods rated, that the emperor might know the wealth of every country, city, and family. In this critical juncture it was that Mary, the espoused wife of Joseph, though very near her time, was

Therefore when this expression is used in the New Testament, it ought to be reduced to its proper signification. Thus, if instead of calling our Saviour the first-born Son of Mary, they had called him her Son, St. Jerome had not to answer Helvidius, who from this phrase took occasion to maintain that the Virgin had other children besides our Saviour, and Helvidius had had no followers. If instead of calling our Saviour the first-born of many brethren, Rom. viii. 29, the first-born of all the creatures, Col. i. 15, and the first-born of God, Heb. i. 6, they had translated, That he is the most august or most glorious of many brethren, the most excellent or the most favoured of all creatures; the most dearly beloved Son of God: Arius and his followers had never imagined that Christ was the first of all the creatures. If when he is called in the original the first begotten of the dead. Rev. i. 15, they had rendered, That he is the Sovereign or most illustrious of the dead, there would be no need of such long commentaries upon this expression, as the most learned divines do acknowledge.

† Predicted. The adversaries of Christianity may cavil as they please, and invent many objections to the scheme of the incarnation, and decry the whole as absurd and impossible; but surely, admitting the omnipotence of God, who originally "formed man of the dust of the ground," we must also admit that it was easy for him, by this method, or any other which he might choose, to prepare a spotless body for the residence of his own Son, "Is any thing too hard for Jehovah?" "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh," 1 Tim. iii. 16

This most stupendous subject is to be studied, not in the spirit of cold indifference, or of daring speculation, but with humble and devout affections, till the fire of divine love burn within us, and constrain us to sing aloud with the holy mother—"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God My Saviour," Luke i. 46.

<sup>\*</sup> Decree. Luke ii. 1.

i Enrol. This was not an exacting of tribute or taxation, but a setting down or enrolling every person according to his family and estate: according to which the vulgar Latin expresses anager of the Profiteri, Luke i. 3, they went to tell what they were worth, which was in order to be taxed.

obliged to accompany her husband Joseph to Bethlehem to be enrolled; where, by the singular appointment of God, she brought forth her first-born in a stable, the vilest part of the inn, and most remote from help at such a time: which undoubtedly did very much enhance the miracle, her delivery being as wonderful as her conception.\*

Though the birth of our Saviour, in all outward appearance, was in the most mean and abject manner, and seemingly unbecoming the majesty of heaven; yet there were several extraordinary circumstances which attended it, and plainly intimated that he was the Son of God. He was no sooner born, but a messenger from heaven proclaimed his birth to the world, and in the field of Bethlehem astonished and rejoiced the shepherds† with the happy news of the nativity of Christ‡ the Lord, born in the city of David, directing them to the place where he was laid; and immediately after the celestial choir welcome him into the world with this harmonious chorus, "Glory" to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will to-" wards men."

The shepherds filled with joy and wonder at this strange and glorious sight, hasten to Bethlehem to prove the truth of these things; where they no sooner arrive but they see the Virgin-Mother, and Joseph the supposed father, attending the god-like babe in the manger, whom in humble reverence they adore, and in awful silence admire the goodness of God: and, when they had gratified their delighted eyes with these miraculous transactions, joyfully

<sup>\*</sup> Conception. It was always the opinion of the church, (saith bishop Taylor) that as there was no sin in the conception, so neither had the Virgin any pains in the production: for to her alone the punishment of Eve did not extend, That in sorrow she should bring forth. And therefore where nothing of sin was an ingredient, there misery could not enter.

<sup>†</sup> Shepherds. The angel's moral in the circumstance of his address to the poor shepherds of Bethlehem is, That none are fit to come to Christ but those who are poor in spirit, despisers of the world, and simple in their hearts, without secular design or craft; and therefore the angel did not apply to Herod, nor to the Scribes and Pharisees, whose ambition had ends contrary to the simplicity and poverty of the birth of J sus.

<sup>‡</sup> Christ. Luke ii. 11, and 14. See the note above on the word nothing, page 218.

disperse the astonishing news among their neighbours, which alike affected all that heard them.

Seven days being expired after the birth of our Saviour, he is circumcised on the eighth day, as the law appointed, and named Jesus, which name was foretold his mother before he was conceived; and therefore it was not to be considered as a name given him by human opinion or intention, or the will of his parents, but by divine authority, he being long before decreed to be the Saviour, which this his name implies.

Though the people in the place of his birth seemed to take little notice of him, and hitherto none but poor shepherds by a revelation from heaven had paid any acknowledgment to him; yet to denote his high birth, and to witness his divinity, a star\* appeared in the East, which moved the curiosity of three wise men† to travel to Jerusalem to worship him. This alarmed Herod,‡ and imme-

<sup>\*</sup> Star. This word signifies an extraordinary star appearing in the heaven, observed by the Magi to differ from the ordinary stars, and some way interpreted to them to be the index or finger to point out this miraculous birth.

<sup>+</sup> Wise Men. The Greek word Mayor, signifies not only those we commonly call magicians, that is, sorcerers, but also philosophers, learned men, students of the liberal sciences, especially of astronomy. These were then famous among the Persians, and were both their kings and priests, as well as among other nations. The time of their coming is not distinctly known. St. Matthew ii. 13, says, That after the wise men's departure the angel appeared to Joseph, and dispatched him into Egypt, which could not be before Mary's purification; for then St. Luke says, ii. 22, they went up to Jerusalem, which cannot be supposed after their going into Egypt, nor between the departure of the Magi and their going thither, for that had been to throw themselves into Herod's hands at Jerusalem, which they were commanded to avoid by going into Egypt. From Jerusalem therefore they returned to Bethlehem, and dwelt there till the coming and departure of the Magi: and therefore the tradition, which makes the Epiphany the twelfth day from the nativity, may mean it of that time twelve-month; according to which it is, that, upon exact enquiring the time of the star's appearing, Herod, Mat. ii. 16, appoints the killing of all the children from two years old and under; which probably he would not have done, if they had informed him that the star appeared but a few days before.

<sup>‡</sup> Herod having by fraud usurped the kingdom of Judea, endeavours to maintain his ill-gotten title by the murder of the lawful heirs. The first of whom, as

diately affected him with jealousy, and put him upon enquiring into the matter. To be farther satisfied, he called a synod of the Christ should be born: they tell him at Bethlehem in Judea, according to what the prophet Micah, ch. v. ver. 2, had foretold, "But thou Bethlehem, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old,

from everlasting."

This was so far from affording any satisfaction to Herod, that it rather inflamed and increased his jealousy, which craftily he concealed. Calling for the wise men privately, he examines them about the appearance of the star, and pretended he would send them to Bethlehem, in quest of the child, that when they had discovered where he was, they should intimate the same to him, that he also might come and worship him. But God disappointed Herod's treachery. The wise men went to Bethlehem, the star which they had before seen in the East being their guide, which went before them till they came to the place where the Son of God was. Into whose presence being admitted; they paid him the most solemn adoration, and presented him with the richest productions of their country, gold; frankincense, and myrrh. Having performed their congratulatory embassy in this solemn manner, they prepared to return to Jerusalem, to acquaint Herod with the discovery they had made; but God, whose infinite wisdom and all-searching eye beheld the wickedness and insincerity of Herod, who had no other design by sending these three wise men to find out the babe but to destroy him, admonishes them in a vision not to acquaint Herod with what

we have seen in the preceding pages, was Hircanus the High-Priest. Secondly, Aristobulus, nephew of Hircanus, and High-Priest. Thirdly, Mariamne his wife, and daughter of Hircanus. Fourthly, Alexandra, the mother of Mariamne. Fifthly, Alexander and Aristobulus, his sons by Mariamne. Sixthly, Antipater, his son by another wife. These were his reasons for murdering the innocents, among whom he hoped Christ would have fallen, who now seemed his only surviving competitor.

they had seen, but to return home to their country another way.

After the circumcision of the holy infant, the next ceremonies to be performed, according to the custom of the law, were the purification of the Virgin-mother, and the presentation of her first-born; which solemnities were to be performed forty days after the nativity, publicly in the temple, by reason of the offering to be made there: which in pursuance of the law was done, the Holy Virgin humbly submitting to the law, which enjoined women to purify themselves, though she had no need of it, her blessed Son, who was purity itself, having submitted to the rite of circumcision. After so divine and miraculous a birth, she repaired to the temple with the sacred infant to present him to the Lord, who continued to evince to the world his having sent his Son to redeem it: for in the great concourse of people that attended on this solemn occasion, there appeared two persons eminent for piety, who, being urged by the divine impulse of the Spirit, came to give an illustrious testimony to their Saviour. Simeon, a man just before God, and who waited for the consolation of Israel, having God's promise that he should not depart this life before he had seen the Lord's Anointed, when through the light of his faith he had discovered God thus hidden under the meanness of human infancy, and the promise which God had made him, thus accomplished, transported with an holy joy, he took the blessed infant in his arms, and in an ecstasy sung, "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. A light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel." And whilst the Holy Virgin and the rest of this pious assembly rejoiced at what this good man uttered, an holy and venerable widow, named Anna, came likewise into the temple, and added her public praises and acknowledgments to those which Simeon had already given of the Saviour. Her exemplary life gave authority to what she said; for after seven years' marriage she had past all the rest of her life to her eighty-fourth year in acts of piety and devotion, praying and fasting continually, and

constantly frequenting the temple at the accustomed hours of performing those duties, while the eminency of her character made a deep impression on all who heard her affirming that this infant was the Messiah sent into the

world for the redemption of Israel.

These ceremonies being performed in the temple at Jerusalem, they returned home to Bethlehem, where they dwelt till after the coming and departure of the wise men in all apparent security, nursing the holy babe, and not in the least suspecting the wicked designs or attempts of any enemy. But the eye of Providence was more watchful: God, who knew the insincerity of Herod's heart, resolved to disappoint him, and sent an angel to Joseph, to warn him of the approaching danger that threatened the holy child; informing him of Herod's cruel design to destroy the infant, and commanding him to retire into Egypt with him and his mother, and there to remain till he should direct him farther. Joseph, who before this had been acquainted with the divine visitation, disputed not the celestial message; but in a dutiful obedience to God, and fear for his sacred charge, immediately prepared for their escape; and taking the advantage of the night to prevent a discovery, travelled to Egypt, where these holy pilgrims remained secure, under the protection of heaven.

Herod having long and impatiently expected the return of the wise men, and finding himself deluded by them, impiously resolved to gratify and secure himself another way, intending such a scene of blood as he vainly thought must inevitably determine this young king's reign, whom his jealousy suggested was come to supplant him in his ill-gotten dominion. Nothing less than a general massacre\* of all the male-children in Bethlehem, and the country around to two years old, could glut this monster's cruelty, and thinking it impossible in so universal a slaughter that any could escape him. Thus he resolved, but heaven

<sup>\*</sup> Massacre. This execution was in the beginning of the second year after Christ's nativity, and not at the two years' end, as some suppose. The number of children slain at this time is said to have been fourteen thousand.

had otherwise decreed; for by this time the intended prey was out of his reach; and safe under the wings of Providence.

Herod is not tardy in putting his bloody resolution into execution. Guilt and malice soon furnishing him with instruments suitable to his cruel purpose, whom he disperses in all parts to execute his bloody commands, and without pity or distinction murder all the male children in Bethlehem, and in all the confines of it, who were not above two years old. Then was wofully verified the prophecy of Jeremiah, chap. xxxi. ver. 15, "Rachel\*" weeping for her children, and would not be comforted." The shricks of tender mothers for their mangled babes, and the groans of expiring infants fill the skies: death and remediless despair raging in every place, and the surface of the earth crimsoned with innocent blood.

During these cruel transactions God had provided a sanctuary in Egypt for the holy child Jesus, a chain of prophecies † exactly concurring in every minute parti-

<sup>\*</sup> Rachel. This part of Jeremiah's prophecy was spoken figuratively of the captivity of Babylon, and the slaughter at Jerusalem, long after Rachel's death, who is here, though long before dead, said to lament; and so also it hath here a second completion in this slaughter of the infants: and Rachel, the mother of Benjamin, of which tribe, with that of Judah, the Jews were chiefly composed, is likewise here figuratively introduced, lamenting the slaughter, as of her children.

<sup>†</sup> Prophecies. St. Matt. ch. ii. ver. 25, alludes to that text in Hosea, xi. 1, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son;" which had one accomplishment when the people of Israel were carried into, and delivered out of Egypt, and was now again fulfilled in this true promised seed of Abraham, that is, in Christ, (of whom Israel, called God's first-born, was a type) and in him, now that he was a child, as it was said in Hosea. And to this purpose it may be considered, how fitly Joseph was a type of Christ, as he is represented to us in the History of his Flight into, and return from Egypt: for as Joseph was by his brethren sold into Egypt, so is Christ by the persecution of Herod driven thither: as Joseph was separated from his brethren, and cast out from among them, so was Christ for fear of Archelaus separated from his own tribe of Judah, and constrained to dwell in Nazareth of Galilee, whose name may denote that flight or separation; and may likewise signify an afflicted or humbled person, which may be applicable to Christ's being brought up in Nazareth; a poor place (can any good come out of Nazareth?) and so a special part of Christ's humiliation to reside there.

cular, as had been foretold some centuries before, and most agreeably and properly accommodated to the person of our Saviour, of whom several persons in the Old Tes-

tament had been types.

The holy pilgrims having tarried nearly seven years (as it is commonly believed) in Egypt, Joseph was assured by an angel of the death of Herod, and commanded to return to the land of Israel with his holy charge. He readily obeys the heavenly vision, and returns: but hearing that Archelaus succeeded his father in Judea, and fearing that the cruelty and ambition of Herod might be entailed upon the son,\* and being also warned of God in a dream to turn aside into the parts of Galilee, (which was a distinct jurisdiction, governed indeed by one of Herod's sons, but not by Archelaus,) he withdrew thither: and there this holy family remained in the city of Nazareth.†

From their return out of Egypt to Judea, and their habitation in Nazareth, till the blessed child Jesus was twelve years of age, we have nothing transmitted to us out of any authentic record, but that they went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover, which opportunities of religion, and public address to God in the rites and solemnities of the temple, they had been denied during their peregrination in Egypt. But being returned to their own country, they again enjoyed the blessings of those holy societies and employments, of which they had been so long deprived. At the feast therefore of the passover, when Jesus was twelve years old, and in the holy city, attending upon the paschal rites and solemn sacrifices of the

Dr. Doddridge is of opinion, with Grotius, Huinsius, and other critics, that the reference made to Hosea xi. 1, is merely in the way of allusion, as also the passage which refers to Jeremiah's prophecy.

<sup>\*</sup> Son. Archelaus, in the very beginning of his reign, massacred three thousand Jews at one time in the temple.

<sup>†</sup> Nazareth. It was said, in effect at least, by many of the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazareen," that is, he shall appear in despicable circumstances, and be treated contemptuously. But, as we do not find the above sentence literally in any of the prophets, we must conclude, with Chrysostom, that if such a sentence originally existed, it has been lost.

law, his parents having fulfilled their days of festivity, went homeward, supposing the child had been in the caravan among his friends, and thus they travelled for the space of a whole day's journey; but when they sought him among their kindred and acquaintance, and found him not, they returned to Jerusalem full of fear and sorrow. Who can express the painful apprehensions of heart which then thronged about the Holy mother, who trembled not only for the loss of the joy of her family, but the hopes of the whole world? What did not her foreboding mind at that time suggest to her upon the apprehension of a loss so incalculably great. Possibly an angel might have carried him she knew not whither; or it may be the son of Herod. might have siezed the prey which his cruel father had missed. Whilst she had spent some time under these anxieties of mind, in her sad and holy pursuit of her lost jewel, despairing of the prosperous event of any human diligence, she made her address to God, the only relief and succour of distressed minds; and entering into the temple to pray, God who knew her desires, prevented her with the blessings of his goodness, and her sorrow was turned into joy and wonder: for there she found her Holy Son sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing and asking them questions.

The bare sight of him soon effaced their care and grief: but the glad parents receive this addition to their joy, they find him illustrated with a miracle; for when they saw him, they were amazed, and so were all that heard him, at his understanding and answers, beyond his education and experience, beyond his years, and even the common abilities and capacities of the best men, discoursing and disputing with the learned, with the power of a prophet, with the brightness of an angel, and the in-

fallibility of inspiration itself.

The Virgin-mother, though everjoyed at the sight of her holy child, could not forbear expressing a gentle admonition to him for the great alarm he had excited, saying, "Son, why hast thou dealt thus with us?" Which he modestly excused by giving this account of himself; "Why should ye seek me? Knew ye not that I must be

about my father's business?"\* These things Joseph and the rest understood not, but Mary laid them up in her heart, well knowing it was part of his employment, and his father's business to be in his house, where she had found him.

Being thus happily recovered by his parents, he returned with them to Nazareth, and was subject to them in all things, lived in holiness and humility, submitting to an ordinary employment, which he undertook in obedience to his supposed father, and for the support of that holy family, which was dear in the eyes of God, though not splendid in the estimation of the world. He is said to have wrought, with his own hands in the business of a carpenter; and when Joseph died, which happened before the manifestation of Jesus unto Israel, he wrought alone, and was no more called "the carpenter's son," but "the carpenter." "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" said his offended countrymen, Mark vi. 3. And in this condition did the blessed Jesus abide till he was thirty years of age; for he that came to fulfil the law would not suffer one tittle of it to pass unaccomplished: for by the law of the nation, and custom of its religion, no priest was to officiate, or prophet to teach, before he was thirty years of age.

What a pleasing example do the character and conduct of Jesus present to young persons. At the early age of twelve years he discovers the most affectionate attachment to the house and service of God, so that after an attendance to religious duties for several days successively, he seems unwilling to leave the sacred spot! What a contrast to this is the reluctance which many young persons discover to all religious exercises, however short; and who are far more warmly addicted to every childish amusement than to the Sabbath, the Bible, and the wor-

ship of God!

<sup>\*</sup> Father's business. The Greek renders this in St. Luke, ch. ii. ver. 49. 27 Tolk Tolk Targos in his father's house; so that it seems to refer to the place where they found him, that is, in the temple.

At twelve years of age he was deeply versed in the knowledge of the law, and all were astonished at his understanding. Surely this may reproach many professed Christians, who at twice or thrice that age, remain totally

ignorant of the grand subjects of revelation!

Notwithstanding, however, this uncommon superiority of sacred attainments, "he was subject to his parents," he did not renounce his obedience to Joseph and Mary, but with due regard to their authority, he returned with them to dwell at the mean city of Nazareth. No talents, no learning, no religious zeal, will justify young persons in the neglect of that plain and universal precept, "Ho-

" nour thy father and thy mother."

Most of all we may admire, the submission of this incomparable person to a state of obscurity, in a despicable country town, till he was thirty years of age, little known or regarded. What astonishing condescension is this, and what a lesson to us all! "He made himself of no reputation," shall we then be impatient, if a state of poverty, obscurity and labour, be allotted to us? Or shall we be transported, by an indiscrect zeal, to push ourselves forward to public notice or public functions? "Let the mind that was in Christ be also in us," so shall we best deserve the name of Christians.

## State of Judea in our Saviour's time, and before.

Judea had been, as we have already seen, brought into subjection to the Romans by Pompey, who, after a siege of three months, took Jerusalem in the year sixty-three, before the Christian æra, about the time of our Midsummer. Josephus always dates the loss of their liberty from that time. The same is said by Tacitus. But though the Jewish people then became subject to the Romans, and it may be said, that from that day forward the rod of heaven hung over them, they enjoyed many privileges, and the freedom of their worship, under the mild government of those masters, as appears both from Josephus, and from the historical books of the New Testament; for when Pompey became master of Jerusalem, he and some of his officers entered into the temple, and the most holy places of

it; but took nothing away. There were then in it the table, the candlestick with its lamps, the pouring vessels, and the censers, all of gold, and great quantities of spices, and two thousand talents in money; all which he left untouched, and the day after he gave orders, that they who had the charge of the temple should cleanse it, and perform the accustomed sacrifices; and he also restored the high priesthood to Hircanus.

And that after this the Jewish people were, sometimes at least, in a flourishing condition, appears from many circumstances. It was during this period, that Herod repaired the temple. Excepting the cloud of glory with which the first temple had been favoured, that erected by Herod may be reckoned to have been equal to it in the splendor and magnificence of the building, and in rich and

costly presents, and other ornaments.

When the Jewish people, after their return from the Baby lonish captivity, laid the foundation of the new house, "many of the priests, the Levites, and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, wept with a loud voice," Ezra iii. 12. But God encouraged them by the prophet Haggai, in this manner; ch. ii. 3, "Who is left among you, that saw this house in its first glory? and how do ye see it now? Is it not in your eyes, in comparison of it, as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord—and be strong, all ye people of the land, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts—for thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I will shake all nations. And the desire of all nations shall come. And I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts, The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts. And in THIS PLACE WILL I GIVE PEACE, saith the LORD of Hosts.

Notwithstanding the innocent blood which Herod had caused to be shed in Bethlehem, his soul was not yet satiated, but sought for more in the adjacent parts: he hunted the country around to glut his cruelty; but divine providence, still watching over its own, timely withdrew

John the forerunner of our Saviour from his rapacious fury. Elizabeth hearing, it is said, of the sad havock Herod's barbarity had made among the infants of Bethlehem, thought her son not secure among the hills, but fled with him into the wilderness, where she attended him with care and tenderness. John was about eighteen months old when his mother first fled with him; and his father Zacharias, at the time of his ministration,\* which happened about this time, was killed, it is supposed, in the court of the temple, Herod resolving to revenge the disappointment of murdering the son upon the father; so that the child was exposed to all the dangers of an orphan, while a bloody tyrant endeavoured his destruction. But when his father and mother were removed, the Lord took him up, as he had formerly done to Ishmael who dwelt in the wilderness, and to Elias when he fled from the rage of Ahab; so to this child, who came in the spirit and power of Elias, to demonstrate that there can be no want where God undertakes to make a provision.

The entertainment that St. John met with in the wilderness, was such as might dispose him to an austere life; for he spent his time in contemplation and prayer, feeding on locusts\* and wild honey, and clothed with a rough garment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle, till the time of

<sup>\*</sup> Ministration. Every rank or course of priests served weekly in the temple by turns; which course falling out by lot, they determined also by lot, the particular service of the priests, who should burn incense, slay the beasts, lay them on the altar, dress the lamps, &c. Zacharias was of the course of Abia, Luke i. 5, that is, of the eighth course, and his lot was to burn incense, Luke i. 9. As to the death of Zacharias, the father of John Baptist, it is the opinion of St. Chrysostom, Peter Martyr, Tertullian, and others, that it was he that Herod slew between the temple and the altar, because he refused to betray his son to him; especially Tertullian, who reports it with this circumstance, which, however, has too much the air of fiction; that the blood of Zacharias had so besmeared the stones of the pavement where he was murdered, that no art or industry could wash it out, the tincture being indelible; as if, because God intended to exact of that nation all the blood of the righteous from Abel to Zacharias, who was the last of the martyrs of the synagogue, he would leave a character of their guilt in their eyes to upbraid their infidelity and cruelty.

his public appearance, which was in the fifteenth year of the emperor Tiberius; Pontius Pilate being then governor of Judea, when the word of God came to John in the wilderness, from whence he departed, and went into all the country round about, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

St. John, according to the prophecies of him, and the designation of his person by the Holy Ghost, was the forerunner of Christ, sent to prepare the way for him, and to dispose the people for the reception of him; and therefore it was necessary he should in his person appear eminent for sanctity, and extraordinarily great in all the occurrences and circumstances of his life, so as he might gain credit to the testimony he was to give concerning the Lord the Saviour of the world. And this the Baptist's character most exactly answered; for at his quitting the solitary desert he seemed what indeed he was, an excellent person. The contempt of the world, which he bore, with his mortified deportment, his austere life, and his admirable zeal in preaching, created so high an opinion of him among the people, that all held him for a prophet, especially when by his baptism he added a greater solemnity to his office. By this he so prevailed, that he made a suitable preparation for the Lord's appearing. And now it was, that multitudes thronged from all parts of the country, to hear the joyful news of salvation from the mouth of the baptist: cities and towns were deserted, whilst the spacious fields were crouded with their inhabitants. Jerusalenz, Judea, and all the country about Jordan, which hear his doctrine, which he delivered with force and power, severely reprehending the Pharisees and Sadducees, exhorting the people to works of mercy, the publicans to decline oppression, and to do justice; the soldiers to abstain from plunder and violence; declaring he was not the Christ, that he only baptized with water, but that the Messiah should

<sup>\*</sup> Locusts. Commentators differ respecting these locusts. The insect properly so called is yet however used for food by many of the natives of Arabia, and the coasts of the Red Sea; and Judea, produced so much honey, that in several places of scripture, it is said, "to flow with honey," which was frequently found in the trunks of trees, and in the clefts of the rocks.

baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire; and this was the joyful dawn of the gospel, to which St. John Baptist was like the morning star, foretelling the approach of the Sun of righteousness, who was just about to enlighten the

world with his presence.

The full time being come, Jesus took leave of his mother and his kindred, to commence his public ministry, and take upon him the prophetical office which he was to sustain.\* Now whilst St. John was baptizing the people at the river Jordan, Jesus himself came to him to be baptized of him: but the baptist, who, it should seem, had never before seen his face, being by the Holy Ghost inspired with a discerning spirit, at his first arrival knew him, and paid him reverence; for when Jesus desired to be baptized, John declined it, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" John was atonished that the Messiah, the Lamb of God, pure and without spot, who needed not the cleansing of repentance, or the washing of baptism, should demand it, and of him a sinner, and his servant. But though he was no sinner himself, yet was he "made sin for us;" and therefore it was proper for him to submit to an ordinance, denoting the impurity of the subject, for he was designed to bear the punishment of sin, in behalf of his people. Accordingly therefore the holy Jesus who came, as he declares in his answer to the baptist's question, to fulfil all righteousness, would receive that rite which his Father had appointed in order to the manifestation of his Son.

John, having by the impulse of the Holy Spirit already descried the Saviour of the World, who offered himself to be baptized, among the vast crouds of people who came to the banks of Jordan for that purpose, after a short expostulation with him of his own unworthiness, who ought rather to receive the honour and blessing of baptism from his Saviour, than his Saviour from him, no longer disputes his Lord's commands, but baptizes him. The Baptist having performed his ministry, the heavens

<sup>\*</sup> Sustain. Acts iii.

were opened, and being filled with an unusual and glorious light, the Holy Ghost in the manner of a dove\* alighted upon his sacred head, and God the Father gave a voice from heaven, saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This was the inauguration and proclamation of the Messiah, when he was about to begin to take upon him the office of the great prophet of the new covenant. And this was the greatest meeting that ever was upon earth, where the whole mystery of the Trinity was opened, and shewn as fully as human apprehension was capable of receiving it. Person, God the Father, kept his state in heaven, giving testimony to his holy Son, and was manifested only by a voice, without any visible representation: the second Person appeared in the veil of humanity: and the third, descending in a glorious body of light with the motion of a dove. Thus was manifested to Israel the blessed Redeemer of the world by baptism, to which, by his submission, he gave the most honourable sanction.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, had opened the heavens, which hitherto had never been opened to man, and was declared to be the Son of God, that he might give some evidence of his piety and constancy before he entered on his prophetic office, it was thought fit that some trial should be endured by him, and to that end, by the impulse of the Spirit of God (of which he was full, Luke iv. 1,) he went from Jordan further into the desert, not voluntarily putting himself upon temptation, but submitting to it according to the appointment of God; being led into the wilderness by the good Spirit, to be tempted by the evil one. Being there, he was enabled by the miracu-

<sup>\*</sup> Dove. As soon as Jesus was baptized, and come out of the water, he fell down on his knees in prayer to his Father, Luke iii. 21, and while he was praying, the heavens in a very remarkable manner parted asunder visibly before Christ, and the Spirit of God descended upon him as a dove descends or alights upon any thing; not in the shape of a dove, but a body of light came down, and alighted upon him. And though St. Luke says in a bodily shape, yet he does not say the bodily shape of a dove; but that this body of light, which fell on our Saviour as he was praying, fell after the hovering manner and motion of a dove.

lous power of Deity to continue forty days and nights without food or drink: during which time he was assaulted with a variety of temptations, but that of hunger seemed to be the most pungent; for at the expiration of the forty days, the devil himself taking advantage of that opportunity, attacks him, inviting him to eat bread of his own providing, which might refresh his human nature, and at the same time prove his divinity; hoping that his hunger, and the desire of convincing the adversary, might tempt him to eat before the time appointed: "If thou art the Son of God," says he, " make use now of that power to thine own relief, and turn these stones into bread;" but Jesus answered, " It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word\* that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Meaning, that in the word of God a promise is expressed or implied of the supply of all things necessary for him that is doing the work of God.

The devil failing in this attempt, tries him again, requiring only a demonstration of his being the Son of God. He taketh him up into the holy city, that is, he carried him in the air, without doing him any hurt, to Jerusalem, being permitted by God so to do, and set him on the battlement of the temple; and urging Psalm xci. 11, to him, he proposed to him to cast himself down from thence, by that means to testify himself to be the Son of God; for if it were so, he might do this securely. Jesus understood his design; and though he was secure of God's protection, yet he would not tempt God, nor vainly solicit his providence, by tempting him to an unnecessary conservation. This assault also, proving as in-

<sup>\*</sup> Word. Bread or ordinary means of sustaining nature is not absolutely necessary to the life of man; God can feed and uphold him other ways, by whatever he pleaseth to make use of to that purpose; his bare word or appointment, Deut. viii. S.

<sup>†</sup> Battlement. The Greek word Pterugion signifies literally a little wing; but it here denotes the exterior circuit of the top of an house, which compasseth it in to keep men from danger of falling from the roof, and is therefore in the law enjoined in their buildings, Deut. xxii. 8, so that the Greek ought to be rendered Battlement.

effectual as the former, the devil unites all his force of art and stratagem; places the holy Jesus upon an exceedingly high mountain, and by a supernatural\* power draws into one view an admirable map of all the beauties and glory of the world, in as splendid and inviting manner as possible, and represents it to the eyes of Jesus, saying, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." The devil growing thus violent in his temptations, and so impudent and blasphemous in his demands, provoked the blessed Jesus to assert his authority, and with holy indignation to dismiss him, repeating the words of the law (Deut. vi. 13, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only† shalt

Parkhurst thinks it was the King's Portico, built by Herod, of which Josephus says, "It was one of the most memorable works that was ever seen under the sun; for whereas the valley itself was here so deep, that one could not bear to look down into it; on the edge of this, Herod raised the immense height of the portico, so that if any one from the roof of this portico should look through both these depths at once, his head would grow dizzy." Somewhere then on the roof of this portico, it is probable, that the devil placed our Saviour.

\* Supernatural. Mr. Maundrell in his travels, visited the scene (as generally supposed) of our Lord's temptation, of which he says, "It is a miserable dry place, consisting of high rocky mountains, so torn and disordered, as if the earth here had suffered some great convulsion. From the top of these hills of desolation, we had, however, a delightful prospect of the mountains of Arabia, the Dead Sea, and the plains of Jericho, into which last we descended, after about five hours' march from Jerusalem. As soon as we entered the plain, we turned upon the left hand, and going about one hour that way, came to the foot of the Quarantania, (so called from our Lord's forty days' fast) which, they say, is the Mountain, where the devil tempted him with the visionary scene of all the kingdoms and glories of the world. It is very steep and high, and its ascent not only difficult, but dangerous."

† Only. St. Augustin, and the Romanists after him, to defend their saint and image-worship, observe that our Saviour in Mat. iv. 10, does not say, "Thou shalt only worship the Lord thy God," though he says, "Him only shalt thou serve:" Inferring from hence, That because the word Only is not used before or with the word Worship, that therefore we may worship saints and images as they do. But this is to be more subtle than the devil himself, who having only required of our Saviour to fall down and worship him, went off baffled at his answer, which yet would have been imperfect and impertinent, if St. Augustin's fancy were true; and on which the devil, no doubt, who is not wont to neglect any advantage, would have taken hold. But if this father, and those who blindly followed his authority,

thou serve." Then for a season Satan ceased to tempt him, (afterwards setting himself more industriously to use every stratagem to take away his life) and the angels came and ministered to him, being messengers of comfort sent from his Father to support his humanity, and to congratulate him on this illustrious victory over the prince of darkness: a victory in which every Christian must rejoice; for thus, our Redeemer, "having himself suffered, being tempted," obtained an experimental fitness, "to succour us when we are tempted," and became also an illustrious example for our imitation, that we should learn

to "resist Satan," that he may "flee from us."

While our blessed Lord was in the desert, struggling against, and overcoming, all the temptations and allurements of the devil, St. John, as became the office of a forerunner, ceased not to give public testimony concerning Christ, now manifested: for after that by a sign from heaven the Baptist was confirmed in spirit, and understood Jesus to be the Messiah, he immediately published to the Jews what God had manifested to him: and first to the Priests and Levites, sent from the Sanhedrim or council, he declared that he himself was not the Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet whom they, by a special tradition expected to be revealed, they knew not when. As concerning himself, he said, "That he was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord:" but there was one amongst them, as yet unknown, a person of great dignity, to whom the baptist was not worthy to perform the meanest office; who coming after John, was preferred before him; who was to increase, while the Baptist should decrease, and who should baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.\*

had applied themselves more closely to study the style of the Scriptures, they would have been ashamed to use such kind of arguments: for it is evident that the word only, which is expressed in the command of serving God, is also understood in that of worshipping him.

<sup>\*</sup> Fire. Fire here, according to St. Chrysostom, signifies the efficacy of the Holy Ghost; whose operation is so mighty where it is felt, that like fire it consumes the impurities of sin. This is a reference, no doubt, to the miraculous ap-

This was the illustrious character of our blessed Lord; but as yet no demonstration was made of his person, till after the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him: and then, when and wherever the baptist saw him, he points him out with his finger, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of 'the world.'' But more particularly after the return of our blessed Lord from the wilderness: for John having declared to the priests and Levites that he himself was not the Christ, the next day he seeth Jesus coming to him, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, he exclaims, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" and confirming his former testimony of him, he adds, "This is he of whom I said, After me cometh one that is preferred before me, for he was before me. And though I knew him not, yet I knew that he should be made manifest to Israel; therefore am I come baptizing with water." And John bare farther record of the Messiah, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven, as a dove descends, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said to me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining upon him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." "This," says he, "I saw; and bear record that this is the Son of God."

The day after the Baptist appeared again; and besides the multitudes that promiscuously flocked to hear his discourses, he had, according to the manner of the Jewish masters, some peculiar and select disciples, who more constantly attended upon his lectures, and for the most part waited upon his person. Amongst these was Andrew, who was then with him about Jordan, when our Saviour, who some time since had been baptized, came that way: upon whose approach the baptist assured them that this was the Messiah, the Divine person of whom he had so often spoken; and, to usher in whose appearance, his whole ministry was but subservient; that this

pearance of tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost, emblematical of the gift of languages, and the heavenly animation with which the first preachers declared the word of life, as well as of the wonderful effects of their doctrine.

was the Lamb of God,—the true sacrifice, which was to expiate the sins of mankind. Upon this testimony, Andrew\* and another disciple (probably St. John) followed our Saviour to the place of his abode, and after some converse with him, Andrew went to acquaint his brother Simon, and both together came to Christ; who, as soon as he beheld Simon, said, "Thou art Simon the son of Jonas, thou shalt be called Cephas,† which signifies a stone."

The day following, Jesus going into Galilee finds out Philip‡ of Bethsaida, and bids him follow him; which was the constant form he used in making choice of his disciples, and those that inseparably attended upon him. Philip being thus honourably distinguished by his Lord and Saviour, he soon found Nathanael, a man of note, and acquainted him with the tidings that the Messiah was come. Nathanael could not easily be induced to give credit to Philip's account; for the title of Nazarene was both by Jews and Gentiles reckoned the greatest reproach that could be fixed on any one; therefore Nathanael questioned with Philip, Can any good thing come out of

<sup>\*</sup> Andrew. Upon this account St. Andrew is generally by the fathers and ancient writers styled the Protocletos, or first-called disciple; but in a strict sense he was not so; for though he was the first of the disciples that came to Christ, yet he was not called till afterwards.

<sup>†</sup> Cepbas. Anaclete and other Roman writers derive Cephas (the Syriac name of Peter, which signifies a stone) from the Greek word Kephale, which signifies a head, and by this silly mistake endeavour to prove St. Peter's supremacy.

<sup>‡</sup> Philip. The prerogative of being first called evidently belongs to Philip, he being one of the first of our Lord's disciples. For though Andrew and Peter were the first that came to and conversed with Christ, yet did they immediately return to their trades again, and were not called to their discipleship till above a whole year after, when John was cast into prison.

Nathanael: Here is room for a very probable conjecture of St. Augustin on Nathanael; it may be wondered at, that our Saviour bestowing such particular marks of esteem on this good man, did not take him into the college of the apostles: to which St. Augustin gives this for answer, because he was a doctor of the law; which profession at that time was become very scandalous, by reason of the many and vile corruptions crept into it; which soon after was the occasion of so many woes proclaimed against the professors of it by our Saviour.

Nazareth? But Philip insisting on what he had seen and heard, urges him to go along with him and see; which he did, and was speedily convinced. Nathanael no sooner had approached his Saviour, but he received from him a most ample testimony of his holy simplicity and sincerity in these words, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael perfectly surprised at such an unexpected evidence of our Lord's omniscience, immediately says, with all the natural frankness of his temper, "Whence dost thou know me?" Jesus replied, that before Philip called him, when he was alone, under the fig-tree, he saw him.\* Upon which, in an ecstasy of joy, Nathanael, acknowledged his Saviour, saying, "Thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel! Thon art the promised Messiah, described to us as a King:" and Jesus took this affection of Nathanael in so good part, that he promised him greater things; which gave occasion to the first prophecy made by our Saviour. For, he said unto him, "Because I said I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. And then he prophesied,‡ that he should see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of man.

<sup>\*</sup> Him. That is, Jesus had in spirit observed what passed in his secret retirement for devout meditation and prayer, probably in his own garden. Nathanael was so struck with this express reference to what none but God and his own conscience had witnessed, that all his prejudices were at once removed, and he asknowledges Jesus as the Messiah, the sent of God.

<sup>+</sup> Son of God. The ancient Jews universally expected that the Son of God would appear on earth, and be that great king whom they had for so many ages expected; this appears from the expression of Nathanael in the present instance, and from the following scriptures, Matt. xxvi. 16. John vi. 69. John xi. 27. Matt. viii. 29. See Dr. Macknight's Harmony, Sect. 18.

<sup>. ‡</sup> Prophesied. John i. 51.

Man. Probably the meaning may be such a train of miracles in his ministry, that it should seem as if heaven was opened, and the angels of God (as in Jacob's vision, Gen. xxviii. 12.) ascending and descending to wait on the Son of Man, to receive and execute his orders. But some think this prediction refers to the ascension of our Lord, of which Nathanael might be a witness; for he is supposed to have been the same person, who in the catalogue of the apostles is called Bartholomew.

Much about the same time there happened to be a marriage at Cana of Galilee, in the neighbourhood of his dwelling, to which Jesus and his mother being invited, he went to oblige the persons espoused, and do honour to the holy rite of marriage. The persons then married were but of indifferent fortunes, richer in the love of their neighbours, than in the fulness of their large possessions. They had more company than wine: for the master of the feast\* complained to the bridegroom, that the guests wanted wine. As soon as the holy mother had notice of this want of wine, she mentioned it to her son, thereby affording him an opportunity of displaying his power, by shewing a miracle in supplying the guests. But Christ ans ered, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." By this answer intending her no denial, to whom he always bare a religious respect, but telling her, that this part of his office, to which he was sent by God, was a thing, wherein she, though his earthly parent, was not to interpose; adding moreover, that it was not yet seasonable for him to shew his power to all, intimating his design, that he would do it more privately, than by her words she seemed to wish. Whereupon, that none but the servants might take notice of it (who knowing the wine was all spent, must of course know if any supply were provided) she gave express charge to them to do whatsoever he com-There were there six water-pots t of stone, cismanded.

<sup>\*</sup> Master of the Feast. According to the piety and order of the Jewish nation they chose the Architriclinos, or Master of the Feast from the order of priests to be the president of it, that by the reverence of his person he might restrain all intemperance, by his discretion govern and order the circumstances, by his religious knowledge direct the solemnities of marriage, and by his power keep the guests within the bounds of modesty and prudence.

<sup>†</sup> Come. No rudeness or disrespect was intended by our Lord's using the word "Woman," in speaking to his mother. Blackwell in his sacred Classics refers to several instances in Greek writers, where the same appellation is given to persons of distinction, even by their inferiors.

<sup>‡</sup> Water-pots. These were set there to wash in, after the manner of the Jews, who constantly washed with a superstitious nicety before meat; especially in all public meetings, for fear of contracting pollution or illegal impurities, which they did with a particularity next to superstition, washing even the seats and tables at their feasts.

terns of a sufficient size, out of which they were wont to draw water for every man's use. The servants filled them to the brim, and, as they were commanded, drew out, and presented to the governor of the feast, who knew not of it, till the miracle became public: for while the guests wondered at the management of this feast in keeping the best wine till the last,\* it being the custom of the Jews to give their guests the strongest and richest wines at first, it grew apparent that he who was the Lord of the creatures, which have all a capacity of receiving the impression of what forms he pleases to imprint, could give new natures, and produce new qualities in any subject in which he thinks proper to glorify his Son.

This was the beginning of miracles which Jesus did in Cana of Galilee; by which he was pleased to grace a nuptial solemnity, and thus bear a testimony to the honor of the marriage state, and at the same time afford a glorious evidence of the presence of his divinity, and accordingly his disciples believed on him more stedfastly than before, as

the fact was so certain and so remarkable. †

Immediately after this miracle, Jesus went down to Capernaum, and abode there a few days; but the great feast of the passover being at hand, he went up to Jerusalem, where the first public act that he performed, was one of holy zeal in behalf of the honour of God and his temple: for divers merchants and exchangers of money made that sacred place a mere market and bank, and brought beasts thither to be sold for sacrifice against the great paschal solemnity, just approaching. At the sight of which the blessed Jesus, being moved with zeal and indignation, made a whip of cords, and drove the beasts out of the tem-

<sup>\*</sup> Last. John x. 7, says, "When men have well drunk." There is no reason to suppose that the guests of this feast had drank to excess, even if it be allowed that it is an allusion to the too frequent custom of doing so at feasts. It is almost blasphemous to suppose that our Holy Saviour would "display his glory" by miraculously furnishing the company with the means of keeping up a drunken revel.

<sup>†</sup> Remarkable. By this miracle a favour was conferred on the newly married couple, as a considerable expense was saved, and an ample equivalent given for the additional charge of entertaining so many of his disciples.

ple, overthrew the bankers' tables, \* and commanded them that sold doves to take them from thence. His holy zeal was heightened at the profanation of the edifice, which was peculiarly set apart for God's service. "Take these things hence," said he, "and make not my Father's house a house of merchandize, for it shall be called a house of prayer to all nations." This action appearing to some persons like the religious bigotry of the zealots among the Jews, if it were not attested by something extraordinary, they thought might be abused into an excess of liberty; and therefore they required a sign of him, to shew by what authority he did these things. But he gratified their curiosity only by foretelling the resurrection of his body after three days' death, which he expressed in the metaphor of the temple; "Destroy this temple, and I will build it up in three days." But he spake of the temple of his body, and they understood him of the temple at Jerusalem; and it was never rightly construed till it was accomplished; for after he was risen from the dead, his disciples recollected that he had formerly spoken this to them. This miracle may justly be considered as one of the most remarkable performed by our Lord; it discovers his power no less than his zeal, for how extraordinary was it, that a number of interested persons should at once submit to the dictates of a man unknown, and unarmed with any temporal or ecclesiastical authority! Surely it must be ascribed to the effect of a supernatural impression on their minds!

Christians, at all times, should remember that "God is a Spirit," and accepts of no other worship than that

<sup>\*</sup> Tubles. The Greek word Trapeza, table, here is that from which those that dealt in returning money, or in bills of exchange, and made advantage or gain by so doing, are called Trapezitæ ordinarily among authors. But here the Trapezitæ seems to signify that sort of men, who (as merchants among us) return money for others to some other place, by which they received some advantage themselves. Hence it was that the Israelites being obliged by the law to come up to Jerusalem (how far soever they dwelt from it) and there to sacrifice and to offer the half shekel for the use of the temple, Exod. xxx. 13, (which by reason of the length of their journey, sometimes they could not do) these Trapezitæ set up their tables in the very temple, that so they might traffic with all that had need of them, in like manner as others brought oxen, and sheep, and doves, to sell there to those who had not brought their sacrifices with them.

which is spiritual. Too often, however, crowds of vain and worldly thoughts intrude themselves, like those buyers and sellers, into our minds, while we are in the house of God. Let us then call to mind this miracle, and consider the Saviour as still saying, "Take these things hence."

At this public convention of the Jewish nation in Jerusalem, Jesus performed many miracles, giving sight to the blind, and feet to the lame, declaring himself to be the Messiah, and persuading many to be his disciples; among whom was Nicodemus, a doctor of the law, and one of the Jewish Sanhedrim, who fearing to come openly in the day time, came by night to Jesus, acknowledging himself to be convinced by the miracles which he had seen: for he admitted that no man could perform those miracles, unless God were with him; which plainly testified that he

was sent by God to teach and instruct mankind.\*

When Jesus perceived his inclination and understanding to be so far advanced, he began to instruct him in the great doctrine of regeneration, observing, that every production is of the same nature and condition with its parent; from flesh comes flesh and corruption; from the Spirit comes spirit, and life, and immortality; and nothing could from a principle of nature arrive to a supernatural end; and therefore the only door to enter into the kingdom of God, was by regeneration, or that influence of the Holy Spirit on the heart, whereby an inward change is effected, and the man becomes "a new creature;" and of which change, baptism by water is the instituted symbol. Without this change or renewal of mind, a person remains in a state of alienation from God, and therefore can have no part in the Messiah's kingdom of grace; for that being a kingdom of righteousness, those only who are changed into the divine likeness, can relish its holy and spiritual precepts. Neither can an unrenewed person enter into the kingdom of glory, being unfit to maintain any communion with God, or relish the enjoyments of that sacred state.

<sup>\*</sup> Mankind. This unspeakably precious gift our blessed Saviour assured Nicodemus was the effect of God the Father's infinite love, who sent his only begotten Son into the world; that they who believe on him should not perish, but inherit eternal life.

This was strange philosophy to Nicodemus; who attending only to the sound, not to the sense of our Saviour's words, asked him how a man advanced in years can be born again?\* But Jesus bid him not to wonder, for this was not the work of human reason, but the operation of God's Spirit. For the Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and is as the wind, certain and obvious in the effects, but secret in the principle and manner of production; and therefore this doctrine was not to be taken according to the pro-

<sup>\*</sup> Born again. "We are aware, that much pains is taken, not to deny our Lord's assertion, for that is express, but by subtilty and refinement to explain away its meaning. "To be born again," it is said, is only a strong eastern metaphor, which implies a renunciation of some errors, whether Jewish or Pagan, and a profession of Christianity. Let us try this interpretation by other passages. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world," 1 John, ver. 4. And can such a conquest be ascribed to every one, who is called a Christian? We have continual and lamentable proof to the contrary. Equally absurd is the notion, that baptism constitutes regeneration. This, indeed, is the outward symbol of it; the water, which is applied to the body, fitly representing the operation of the Spirit in cleansing and purifying the soul. But "whosoever is born of God sinneth not," 1 John, ver. 18. And is this to be affirmed of every baptized person? Alas! how different is the case!

<sup>&</sup>quot; It is said, then, that " to be born again" is to reform the life, and pay an exact regard to the duties of morality. This we grant, is highly expedient and necessary, and is an effect which will flow from regeneration, but it may be produced without it. For do not many " make the outside clean, whose inward part is full of wickedness?" Luke xi. 39. But the change, of which we speak, originates within, and is properly a renovation of the heart, in which corrupt and carnal affections are subdued, and holy and spiritual desires and tempers are implanted. It is, therefore, "a new creation," so that the man is, as it were, made over again, not as to his body, which suffers no alteration, but as to the dispositions of the mind: the depravity of his nature is rectified. The language is metaphorical, we allow; and who ever denied it? But some meaning was intended to be conveyed in the figure; and certain modern explanations have subtilized it into nothing. If Jesus designed only to inculcate an external reformation of conduct, and a regularity of morals, he used a most dark and intricate manner of expression, which perplexes rather than instructs. On this interpretation the metaphor is absurd, and all the solemnity of our Lord's address is mere trifling; for he has rendered that obscure, which in plain words would have been easily understood. Had this been the sense, Nicodemus would not have wondered; nor would Jesus have spoken of it as a mysterious doctrine."

portions of natural principles or experiments of sense, but to the declarations of heaven.

Our Lord then\* proceeds in his discourse, assuring him that there are yet higher things for him to apprehend and believe; for this, in respect of some other mysteries of his gospel, was but as earth in comparison of heaven. Then he informed him of his descent from heaven, foretels his death and ascension, and the blessing of redemption, which he came to procure for mankind: he preaches the love of the Father, the mission of the Son, the rewards of faith, and the glories of eternity; he upbraids the unbelieving and impenitent, and declares the differences of a holy and corrupt conscience; the shame and fears of the

one, and the confidence and serenity of the other.

From Jerusalem the holy Jesus went into the country of Judea, attended by many disciples who were convinced of his divine mission by the evidence of his miracles: and there he tarried with them and baptized; at which time John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salem, a place chosen by him as commodious to that purpose by reason of the pools or rivulets of water. But John's disciples hearing that Jesus baptized, came to inform him, that the person to whom he bare witness, received proselytes with the same ceremony of baptism as himself, and that there was a great number of persons who resorted to him. In answer to whom John says; I can do no more than I have commission from God to do, and that commission doth not equal me to him; and therefore you cannot but remember, that I always said of myself, I am not the Messiah, but only his herald. John therefore acquitting himself thus, in public by renewing his former testimony of Christ, that he was the Messiah, foretels that his own miinistry was near a close; that the Messiah should daily increaset in splendor, but that he should proportionably decrease, for Christ came from above, and was above all; and that the sum of his doctrine was that which he had heard and seen from the Father, whom God had sent to that purpose; to whom God had set his seal, that he

<sup>\*</sup> See John iii. to ver. 22.

was true; who spake the words of God; whom the Father loved; to whom he gave the Spirit without measure, and into whose hands He had delivered all things; this was He whose testimony the world received not. And that they might know not only what a glorious person they slighted, but how great salvation they also neglected, he sums up all his sermons, and finishes his mission with this solemn declaration, "He that believeth on the son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of god abideth on him."

And now that the baptist had fulfilled his office of bearing witness to the Saviour of the world, God was pleased to grant him his dismission, which was effected in the following manner: John, who had learned to despise the world and all its vanities, performed his duty so justly and without respect of persons, that as he reproved the common people for their transgressions, so he spared not Herod himself, though he knew him to be a powerful and a sanguinary prince; but frankly and honestly told him, that it was utterly unlawful for him to live with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. Herodias being touched with this reproof from John to Herod, designed him mischief, and would have removed him out of the way by some death or other, but could not easily accomplish it: for Herod,\* because of the influence John had

<sup>\*</sup> Herod. Our translation and that of Geneva seem to represent Herod as a prince who respected John Baptist, and had a great esteem for all that he said, Mark vi. 20, though in St. Matthew and St. Luke, he is represented as a wicked wretch, whom nothing but the fear of the people who looked on John as a prophet, restrained from putting to death, Mat. xiv. 5, Luke iii. 19, 20. But we are to consider, that the Greek word, which the Geneva version translates to reverence, and our's to observe, signifies to keep prisoner, or to observe with an ill design. We must consider farther, that R. Stephanus, and Beza, had some Greek copies wherein instead of the words which we render, "He did many things," there are words which signify, "He was much vexed or troubled:" which indeed much better represent the temper of that dissolute and wicked prince. Josephus observes, that Herod had put the baptist to death, because he

over the people, was afraid to meddle with him, Mat. xiv. 5, and therefore shut him up in prison; where, whether he heard him oft and gladly, as some versions have it, I shall refer to the note: but it is certain that this offensive rebuke was never forgotten, though it did not prevail on him to separate from her; and on this account it was that about a year afterwards, he felt the effect of this wicked woman's revenge in prison: where, for the pre-

sent, we leave him, and return to the history.

The blessed Jesus hearing that John was cast into prison, and that his own popularity had excited the envy of the Pharisees, because such multitudes resorted to his baptism, (which, however, he administered, not in person, but by the deputation\* of his disciples, he left Judea, and came again into Galilee; and in his passage he touched at Sychar, a city of Samaria; where in the heat of the day and weariness of his journey, he sat down in a place where Jacob had once digged a well; whither, when his disciples were gone to buy meat, a Samaritan woman came to draw water, of whom Jesus asked a draught. The woman little knew the excellency of the Person who requested so small a favour; but prosecuting the spite of her nation, and the interest and quarrel† of the

thought the people led by him; which is an argument that he did neither respect him, nor hear him gladly, nor do many things for love of him. Though this text is otherwise explained by Dr. Hammond, and many ancient commentators.

<sup>\*</sup> Deputation. Fuodius, bishop of Antioch reports, that Jesus baptized the blessed Virgin his mother and Peter only, and Peter baptized Andrew, James and John, and they others, Niceph. 1. 2, c. 3, Hist.

<sup>†</sup> Quarrel. The ground of the quarrel was this. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, Salmanassar, king of Assyria sacked Samaria, transported the Israelites to Assyria, and planted an Assyrian colony in Samaria: which colony being destroyed by divine vengeance, the king thought the cause was their not serving the God of Israel, and therefore sent a Jewish captive priest to instruct the remaining Assyrians in the Jewish religion, notwithstanding they still retained the Gentile superstitions, till Manasses, the brother of Jaddi the High-priest at Jerusalem, married the daughter of Sanballat. Manasses being reproved for marrying the daughter of an uncircumcised Gentile, and admonished to dismiss her, flies to Samaria, persuades his father-in-law to build a temple in mount Gerizim, introduces the rites of daily sacrifice, and makes himself High-priest, pretends to be the

schism, demanded why he, who was a Jew, should ask water of her who was a Samaritan, the Jews having no commerce or familiar communication with the Samaritans. This quarrel so implanted, for though the woman perceived Jesus to be a prophet, yet she undertook this question with him: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Jesus knew the schism was great enough already, and he was unwilling to make it wider; and though he gave testimony to the truth by saying, "Salvation\* is of the Jews," and "we know what we worship, ye do not;" yet because the subject of the question was shortly to be taken away, Jesus takes occasion to preach the gospel, to hasten an expedient by way of anticipation to reconcile the disagreeing interests, and settle a revelation to be verified for ever.

Our Lord, who always improved external circumstances for spiritual edification, takes occasion, from the water of that well, to discourse of living water, or of the Holy Spirit under that figure, which he would give to every one who asked that blessing of him. He also refers to that abandoned course of life† which she unhappily led, and at length, declares to her, that he was the long-expected Messiah. Upon which he is interrupted by his disciples, who had returned from the city, and wondered to see him alone talking with the woman, contrary to his usual custom and reservation.

The woman full of joy and wonder left the water-pot,

true successor of Aaron, and commences a schism in the time of Alexander the Great. Hence the question of religion grew so high, that wherever a Jew and Samaritan met, it occasioned great animosities, which often terminated in bloodshed or murder.

<sup>\*</sup> Salvation. John iv. 22.

<sup>†</sup> Life. When our Saviour directed the woman of Samaria to call her husband, she answered, I have no husband; and the translations make our Saviour approve her answer, by replying, Thou hast well said, I have no husband. But Erasmus and others have very judiciously observed, that this is an ironical way of speaking, which is so far from approving what one says, that, on the contrary, it represents it absurd and ridiculous. The words then ought to be rendered, "Finely answered, indeed! I have no husband, &c."

and ran to the city to publish the Messiah; and immediately the people of the city came out to see, and many believed him upon the testimony of the woman, and more when they heard his own discourses. They then invited him to the town; and though, Matt. x. 5, he forbad his disciples at that time to go into any city of the Samaritans, that they might convince the Jews that they were the objects of his peculiar care; yet to shew that the gospel was not their inclosure, he himself now stays two days with the Sanfaritans, who received him hospitably; after which he returned to Galilee, where he was received with great reverence and respect, by reason of the many miracles which the Galileans saw him perform at the feast; for they also went to Being at Cana, where he wrought the first miracle, a certain noble\* person came and addressed himself to Jesus with great humility, desiring him that he would come to his house, and cure his son, now at the point of death: this request he repeated with much importunity, fearing his son should be dead before he could reach him. Holy Jesus, to display the excellency of his power, and that he did not perform his miracles by any natural operations, cured the child at a distance, and dismissed the believing parent, who joyfully returning home, was by the way congratulated with the welcome news of his son's recovery; and enquiring of his servants the hour when the child began to amend, perceived, by the account they gave him, that he recovered at the exact time when Jesus pronounced those salutary and healing words, " Thy Son liveth." Upon this happy miracle the pious courtier was convinced of our Saviour's divinity, and believed on him; and not only he, but his whole family was converted, and became the disciples of Christ. This was the second miracle that Jesus wrought in Cana, he having in the mean time performed many others in various places at Jerusalem and other parts of Judea.

<sup>\*</sup> Noble. The Greek word Basilicos in this place undoubtedly signifies an officer of the king; one that had some place at the court of Herod Antipas, who was then tetrarch of Galilee. St. Jerome renders it Palatin. But the great mistake of all about this word is in the Latin version, which he reads Regulus, by mistake reading the Greek word Basiliscos for Basilicos.

After this, Jesus left Nazareth, and came to Capernaum, a maritime town, and of great resort, choosing that for the scene of his preaching, and place of residence: for now the time was fulfilled that the office of John Baptist should expire, and the kingdom of God was at hand. Our blessed Saviour therefore preached the sum of the gospel, faith, and repentance. And what they were, all his future sermons fully declared.

While he dwelt in this town of Capernaum,\* the work of the gospel becoming great and extensive, the Holv Jesus thought it convenient to choose disciples to his ministry and service in the work of preaching, and to be witnesses of all that he should say and do, for ends which were afterwards made public. In order to which he walked by the sea-side, where he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. While he was preaching there, the people so thronged about him, that he was obliged to enter into Simon's ship; and desiring him to put off a little way from the land, he sat down and taught the people from the ship: which sermon of his he confirms immediately with a miracle: for as soon as he had done speaking to the people, he ordered Simon to launch out into the deep, and let down the nets; who despairing of success from the want of it during the preceding night, told Jesus it would be to no purpose; however, in obedience to him he would let the nets down, which he had no sooner done,

<sup>\*</sup> Capernaum. This place is no where mentioned in the Old Testament. Probably it was one of those towns which the Jews built upon their return from Babylon. It is conjectured, that it stood somewhere on the north-west shore of the lake of Genesareth. This lake, according to Josephus was a hundred furlongs in length, or twelve miles and a half, and its breadth forty furlongs, or five miles.

Formerly it was called the Sea of Chinneroth, Numb. xxxiv. 11, but in later times the Sea of Galilee, and the Sea of Tiberias. The river Jordan runs through the middle of it, and stocks it with a great variety of excellent fish.

The countries round about this lake enjoyed a large share of our Lord's company and instructions. And thus "Galilee of the Gentiles," or, rather, the boundary of the Gentiles, (Galil Hagogim,) or those parts of Palestine which bordered on the heathen countries, "saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light sprung up," Matt. iv. 16.

but he inclosed such a multitude of fishes, that the net broke, and they were forced to call to their partners for help; who coming, filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. This prodigious draught of fish struck Simon Peter and his partners with amazement and fear; insomuch that Peter, under a sense of his own unworthiness, fell down at the feet of Jesus, and desired him to depart from him, for he was a sinful man. But Jesus speaks comfort to Peter, bids him not fear; for by that miracle he had consigned him and his partners to become fishers of men, who by their prudence, holiness, and evangelical doctrine, should gain souls to God. And as soon as they had brought their ships to land, and secured them, Jesus commanded Simon and his brother Andrew to follow him; who in dutiful obedience to the call of their blessed Lord, left their nets and all their connexions, and followed him. When Jesus had proceeded a little farther, he saw two other persons, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. And immediately he called them, whose early faith and cheerful obedience to the commands of the Lord caused them to enter into the service of him, who alone was able to emancipate them from the slavery of sin, and of this wicked world. They therefore, leaving their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, immediately followed him.\* With this little family, Jesus went up and down Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, healing all manner of diseases, curing demoniacs, cleansing lepers, and administering strength and comfort to all diseased and afflicted persons that were brought to him.

Among the many instances of remarkable cures which Jesus wrought, one was very conspicuous; for while he was teaching in a synagogue at Capernaum, and the people stood astonished at his doctrine (for the authority and power with which he expressed himself, proved him

<sup>\*</sup> Him. Our Lord was pleased to call his first disciples, not from the palaces of kings, or the schools of philosophers, but from among the poor and unlearned, that the success of his gospel, "the excellency of the power," might the more evidently appear to be "of God and not of man."

to be more than mortal) to add to their admiration, one of the congregation that was possessed with an unclean spirit cried with a loud voice, "Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth, art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy one of God." Thus the devils themselves confessed him to be the very Christ, the Son of God: but Jesus rebuked the devils, not suffering them farther to proclaim him to the world; choosing rather to implant faith in the hearts of his disciples by suitable arguments, and the holy influence of his Spirit, than to be manifested by the conviction and forced testimonies of accursed and unwilling spirits. These wonders spread his fame abroad universally, which daily increased by the addition of new miracles: for going from the Synagogue to Simon's house, by a touch of his sacred hand, he cured the mother of Simon's wife of a fever. These repeated instances of his divine power and authority invite all people either through curiosity or necessity to come to him, but especially the latter; for whoever had any diseased persons among their relations and friends, or such as were possessed by devils, brought them to him, in an assured expectation of speedy cure and relief; of which none who ever addressed themselves to him failed, for his compassion was as great as his power. These miraculous cures rendered him the subject of general conversation and admiration; insomuch, that by the continual application of the distressed to him, he was, as it were, besieged by an army of invalids in Simon's house, who flocked thither for relief, and whom he expeditiously dismissed with cure and comfort.

After he had healed those multitudes which came to Simons' house, he retired into a desert place very early in the morning, that he might have an opportunity to pray, free from the importunities and noise of the multitude. But he could not be so hid, being soon discovered even in his very solitude; for the multitude found him out, thronging him with their constant attendance. To prevent their more importunate addresses, Jesus plainly told them, he must preach the gospel to other cities also, resolving to pass to the other side of the lake of Genesa-

reth, so to avoid the throng; whither, as he was passing, a scribe offered himself as a disciple, till Jesus candidly informed him that his condition was worse than that of foxes and birds, for whom an habitation was provided, but none for him, no not a place to lay his head, and find rest. What afterward became of this forward professor we find not. Others who were probationers of this fellowship, Jesus bound to a speedy profession, not suffering one to go home to bid his friends farewell, nor ano-

ther so much as to bury his dead.

By the time that Jesus reached the ship it was late, and he, heavy to sleep, slept as soundly as weariness and innocence could make him, insomuch that a violent storm which then happened could not awake him; till the ship almost covered with the impetuous fury and dashing of the waves, the men already sunk in their spirits, and the ship ready to sink too, the disciples awaked him, and called for help, saying, "Master, carest not thou that we perish?" Jesus arising, reproved their unbelief, and commanding the winds to be still, and the sea peaceable, immediately there was a great calm. This excited fresh surprise in all the people in the ship, who, seeing with what authority he restrained the raging winds and waves, could not forbear asking who he was, though his actions plainly denoted him a person sent from God, and endued with divine power.

The storm thus appeased, they presently arrived in the land of the Gerasens,\* or Gadarenes. Near to the city of Gadara, there were many sepulchres in the caves of the rocks,† where the dead were buried, and where

<sup>\*</sup> Gerasens. St. Matthew, ch. viii. v. 28, calls them so; but St. Mark, ch. v. ver. 1, and St. Luke, ch. viii. ver. 26, call them Gadarenes; the reason of which is their lying near together. The word Gergesenes or Gerasens was the remaining name of an extinct people, being one of the nations whom the sons of Jacob drove from their inheritance. In this land there were two cities; Gadara from the tribe of Gad, to whom it fell by lot in the division of the land, (which having been destroyed by the Jews, was rebuilt by Pompey at the request of Demetrius Gadarensis, Pompey's freed-man; and near it was Gerasa, as Josephus reports. Which diversity of towns and names is the cause of the various recitation of this story by the evangelists.

<sup>†</sup> Rocks. The sepulchres of the Jews were frequently hollowed out of rocks, and the melancholy disposition of madmen naturally led them to such places.

many superstitious persons used the Memphitic and Thessalic rites, invoking evil spirits. At the very instant of our Saviour's arrival in the country there met him two\* possessed with devils from these tombs, exceedingly fierce, as they had been for a long time, and so infested those parts that no man durst pass that way. As soon as they saw the holy Jesus approach, they cried out, "Jesus, thou Son of God, what have we to do with thee, art thou come to torment us before our time?"† But Jesus immediately displays his power over them, by commanding the devils out of the possessed persons. There was no room to dispute his authority; they must forsake the poor wretches, whom they had so long possessed and tortured, and seek another habitation.

At that time there were certain men feeding swine,‡ which though extremely abhorred by the Jewish religion, yet for the use of the Roman armies, and quartering of soldiers, they were permitted, and divers privileges granted to the masters of such herds. The devils therefore besought Jesus that he would not send them into the eternal abyss, but permit them to enter into the

<sup>\*</sup> Two. St. Mark, ch. v. ver. 1, and St. Luke, ch. viii. ver. 27, mentions but one man; St. Matthew, ch. viii. ver. 28, mentions two; which difference has little weight in it, if any: for St. Matthew naming two says the truth, and the others, which name but one, do not deny that there were more. Besides, St. John, ch. xxi. ver. 25, says, the evangelists do not pretend to write all that was done by Christ, for the world then could not contain all the books of his acts.

Augustin thinks that one of these demoniacs was more remarkable than the other, perhaps for his birth, or parts, or interest in the country, and that his cure made more noise, and for that reason was mentioned by Mark and Luke, while they omitted the cure of the other.

De Consensu Evang. lib. 2, No. 56.

<sup>†</sup> Time. That is, before the time of the last judgment, when they are to be eternally punished; till then they remain in the airy region. Thus St. Augustin de civitate Dei.

<sup>‡</sup> Swine. Though it was contrary to the custom of the Jews to keep swine; yet the city of Gadara being a Greek city, and inhabited chiefly by Greeks and Syrians, and for the necessities of the Roman soldiers, it is no way strange, that swine were kept there. Besides, this city of Gadara is by Josephus reckoned among the Greek cities which Pompey took from the Jews, and consequently butfew, if any Jews at that time inhabited there.

swine; which he allowed, and the swine immediately ran down a steep place into the lake of Genesareth, and perished in the waters: revenging hereby, as they in their diabolical cunning and malice thought, their being dispossessed of man, whom they delight to torment and destroy, and so exasperate the inhabitants against our Lord for the loss of their swine, that they should neither entertain him nor his gospel; which at that time, was the effect actually produced; for this event so offended the inhabitants, that they came and intreated Jesus to leave their country.\*

These Gadarenes certainly proved themselves unworthy of the distinguished honour of enjoying the presence, discourses and miracles of the Son of God: he was therefore pleased to take them at their word, and immediately leave their country, from whence we find him bending his course to the lesser Galilee, and so again to the city of Capernaum, where he was met by several Scribes and Pharisees, who came from Galilee. And whi'e they were sitting in a house, which was so encompassed with the multitude, that no business or necessities could be admitted at the door, a poor paralytic was brought by four men to the house, where being denied entrance by the vast crouds that thronged about the door, their earnest zeal and hope soon furnished them with means to approach the heavenly physician; for they uncovered the roof of the house, † and let the sick man down in his bed

<sup>\*</sup> Country. Though several difficulties attend the explanation of this story, and relates to evil spirits, and to the abyss; yet we are plainly taught a very useful lesson, namely, That it was not in the power of a vast number of evil spirits, to do the least mischief even to so contemptible a creature as a swine, without divine permission. This should encourage all christians to rely on the providence of God, and never to give way to the fear of evil spirits.

<sup>†</sup> House. Great houses in the east, had commonly a court yard in the midst. This court was surrounded with cloisters, and chambers, the roof of which was always flat, and furnished with a balustrade, or parapet wall. The entrance to the roof was by a stair-case from the porch, so that access might be had to it by the friends of the paralytic, who let him down by cords, having first removed part of the parapet into the court, or the midst, which was properly called "the house."

with cords in the midst before Jesus, as he was conferring He knew the cause of this extraordiwith the doctors. nary manner of conveying this poor diseased wretch to him, and being pleased with their faith, he saith to the sick man, "Son, be comforted, thy sins are forgiven thee." This expression offended the Scribes and Pharisees, thinking it to be blaspliemy, and that none but God could forgive sins; wherefore the blessed Jesus, to verify his absolution in proportion to their understandings (for the Jews believed that all afflictions were punishments for sin, and that removing the punishment was forgiving the sin) to prove that his sins were forgiven him, removed that which they supposed to be the effect of his sin, and by curing the palsy prevented their farther murmur about the pardon: "That ye might know," says he, "that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins; he saith to the sick of the palsy, Arise,\* take up thy bed and walk." Immediately, the man arose up among them, and took up the bed or mattrass on which he lay, and went forth before them all, insomuch that they were all amazed: and being fully convinced by ocular demonstration, and satisfied according to their own principles, they could no longer deny or disown that power which God had so visibly bestowed on his blessed Son Jesus; which struck them with fear and amazement, and inspired them all with the spirit of praise to thank and glorify God: which none did more joyfully than the restored paralytic, who, all the way he returned to his habitation, praised God for his mercy.

It was not long after the performance of this mighty cure, that Jesus again walked toward the sea, and as he passed on his way thither, seeing Matthew the publicant

See Luke v. 19. Thus Dr. Shaw and other travellers describe the houses of the east. See also Doddridge and Calmet.

<sup>\*</sup> Arise. Matt. ix. 1. Mark ii. 1. Luke v. 18.

<sup>†</sup> Publican. Though the office of publican among the Romans was very honourable; yet among both Jews and Greeks, the name and persons were odious, not only because they were strangers, but because the Jews stood upon the charter of their nation and privilege of their religion, that none of them should pay tribute;

sitting at the receipt\* of custom, he ordered him to follow him. Matthew no sooner hears the divine summons but he obeys, and readily quits his office, and all those dazling heaps of gold, which command all things else, but have not power enough to bribe his longer stay with them. Matthew being thus called, invites his master to a feast, to which he had also invited many of his brethren publi-But the Pharisees, when they saw that cans, and others. he eat with publicans and sinners (for so they called all besides themselves) murmured and whispered against Christ, and expostulated with his disciples, why their master and themselves would do that which was so contrary to the Jewish law, namely, to eat and drink with heathens, and those that conversed with them? But Jesus undertaking the argument, gave so fair an account of his intercourse with those persons, that the objection turned to his praise; for he conversed with them, because they were sinners: and it was as if a physician should be reproved for his communication with sick persons: therefore was he sent, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, to advance the reputation of mercy above the rites of sacrifice. They farther urged the practice of John's disciples, who fasted often; but that the disciples of Jesus did not fast. In answer to which Jesus tells them, that the case of his disciples was the same with those to whom the bridegroom was come in person to espouse the church; but that the days should come when the bridegroom should be taken from them, and that in those days they should fast.

During this interview and argument between the blessed Jesus and the proud Pharisees, Jairus, a ruler† of

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and also because they exercised great injustice and oppression, having a power unlimited.

<sup>\*</sup> Receipt. The Greek word Telonion, signifies a publican's stall.

<sup>†</sup> Ruler. There was among the Jews the less and greater Sanhedrim, or consistory, Mat. v. 22. The former consisting of twenty-three judges in every city; the latter of seventy-two in Jerusalem. The greater Sanhedrim was made up of the chief priests and elders, or presbyters of the people, called often the elders of Israel, and the scribes of the people, Judg. v. 11. They of the less consistory were called rulers, as here.

the synagogue, came to him, desiring him that he would help his daughter, who then lay at the point of death. He questioned not the ability of the holy Jesus, but was confident that if he laid his hand upon her, she would recover. The forwardness of Jairus's faith claimed our Saviour's compassion, who was always more ready to grant than the people were to ask: therefore he immediately went with him to his house; to which, as he was walking, a woman met him that had been diseased with a bloody flux for twelve years, without any hope of remedy from art or nature, and had consumed her fortune in expectation of a cure, but to no purpose. This woman having heard of the many miraeles which Jesus had wrought upon all diseased and demoniac persons, and in the confident persuasion of a holy and strong faith, said, " If I might but touch his clothes, I shall be whole." The poor woman came trembling, full of hope and reverence; and thinking that in the crowd she might not be perceived, she gently touched his garment, and immediately her disease was Jesus being sensible of that divine emanation, which was the cause of this cure, turned about in the press, and asked who touched him? Every one that was near, treated this question with indifference, it being altogether impossible but that in such a crowd many must touch him: but the poor woman who had received the benefit, was most sensibly affected; for fearing her presumption had carried her too far, in thus clandestinely stealing a cure, as she thought, in great disorder and concern came to Jesus, and at his feet declared the whole truth of what had happened to her. Jesus, with joy and compassion, at once relieved her from her fears, assuring her that her cure was the effect of her faith, and so dismissed her with the blessing of peace, and a confirmation of her being perfectly healed, "Be whole of thy plague:" and the woman-was made whole from that very hour.

After the performance of this miracle Jesus hastened to the house of Jairus, from whence a servant came, and met them with the news of his daughter's death, desiring him to give Jesus no farther trouble; who, over-hearing what the servant said, comforted Jairus, bid him not fear, but believe, and he should find the blessed effects of his faith in

the recovery of his daughter. Jairus joyfully attends our Saviour to his house, where they find the minstrels\* and other people busily preparing for the interment of the ruler's daughter, with music and other solemnities for the funeral. For which Jesus reproves them, saying, "Why make ye this ado? Weep not, but give place; for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth." Then entering with the parents into her chamber, he approached her as to one that was asleep, and taking her by the hand, he called, and awakened her from her sleep of death; which struck her parents with such astonishment, that they could scarce believe their own eyes: but Jesus, to confirm this miracle. ordered them to give her something to eat, to convince them she was alive.

This miracle thus happily performed to the admiration and joy of the afflicted parents, he leaves them to the enjoyment of the comfortable fruits of it, strictly charging them to conceal it, hereby intending to make the noise and report of him less popular. But it is too natural to humanity to desire most earnestly that from which we are most strictly restrained. The glad parents, and other witnesses of this miracle, cannot conceal their joy, which in gratitude for so great a mercy they thought themselves obliged to divulge.

And here it is to be observed, that, as if time was to be one continued series of wonders of the holy Jesus, not a day passed without some eminent performances and exertions of his divinity: a single instance in one day or place will not complete his fame, but each moment of time, and every place where he went, must give testimony of his divine power and virtue. He had no sooner departed from Jairus, than two blind men addressed themselves to him for help; first recognizing his family, "Thou son of David," and then imploring his aid,

<sup>&</sup>quot;Have mercy upon us." Jesus commanding the blind

<sup>\*</sup> Minstrels. This custom of having musical instruments in funerals crept in among the Jews but of later days, and from the rites and ceremonies of the Gentiles: for in the Old Testament there is no mention made of any such solemnity and custom.

men to be brought to him, demanded of them whether they had faith enough to expect a cure of their blindness from him? To which they joyfully replied, they believed: and as a testimony of his power, and their faith, he touched their eyes, proposing the cure conditionally to them, "according to your faith be it unto you." The blessed effects followed both; for immediately their eyes were opened, and they, who had long been deprived of the blessing and comfort of light, now gladly beheld it: but with infinitely greater satisfaction, when they saw "the

" true Light, that came to enlighten the world."

This miraculous cure was succeeded by another as great as the preceeding, but of a different nature; for as the holy Jesus passed along, the people seeing the mighty power whereby he had healed others, questioning not in the least his omnipotent gift, brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil, whom he immediately dislodged, so much to the astonishment of the spectators, that they all unanimously confessed that the like was never before seen in Israel; but the spiteful Pharisees, who being ready to burst with envy, could forbear no longer, said that he cast out these devils by the help of the prince of the devils. This malicious and groundless calumny our blessed Lord wisely refuted, by turning their own argument upon them: for, said he, "How can Satan drive out Satan? Or if the whole community of devils make an insurrection and schism against one another, will they not soon be destroyed?" By this the malice of the Pharisees became a contradiction, being in itself unreasonable; nothing being more ridiculous than for the devil to divide his kingdom, and consequently destroy his own power. But this was but an eruption of their malice: all the last year, which was the first of Jesus's preaching, every thing was quiet, neither Jews, Samaritans, or Galileans, openly opposed his doctrine or person, but he preached freely, and without any external molestation.

The first and peaceable year of our blessed Lord's preaching being expired, there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. This feast was the second passover he kept after he began to preach. Being arrived at Jerusalem, he finds an impotent person ly-

ing at the Sheep-Pool \* of Bethesda, waiting till an

\* Sheep-Pool. This Sheep-pool was the place where the sacrifices used to be washed; and Bethesda, a house of mercy, so called in Hebrew, or an hospital, where the sick lay to be cured. As to the Sheep-pool, there are many conjectures about its medicinal virtue. The use of it in relation to sheep was not for the washing of live sheep there by such as brought them to be sacrificed, out the carcases or entrails of them when they were slain: and this was done by the Nethinim (or inferior officers) who delivered them to the priests to be offered in the temple: which supposes this washing to be intermediate between the slaying and offering the sacrifices, and to belong to all the sacrifices, not the sheep only. Such was the opinion of some, who gave this as the commonly assigned reason of the divine healing power that these waters had, because the sacrifices were washed there.

Dr. Maclane is of opinion that this was a public bath, as the word  $\pioh\nu\mu$  by signifies, as is plain from the sense of its primitive  $\pioh\nu\mu$  bath at Jericho. Wherefore, their opinion who affirm that this pool served for washing the sheep designed for sacrifice before they were driven into, the temple, and the entrails also of the beasts sacrificed there, seems to be without foundation. Besides, it is inconsistent with the situation of Bethesda, near the sheep gate in the south-east wall of the city, or according to the compilers of the Universal History, in that which was on the north-east, a great way from the temple.

The ingenious editor of Calmet's dictionary, in his FRAGMENTS, No. 66, proposes another method of solving the difficulties which attend this relation.

He supposes that there were, in fact, two distinct waters; first, the constant body of water in the pool, wherein the sheep were washed, before they were sacrificed; and, secondly, an occasional issue of water, falling from a crevice of the rock whereinto this bason was sunk, from the height of several feet; he conceives that this was the medicinal water which "was troubled at the season;" and falling perhaps in no great quantity, the person who could first get to it, received its full benefit, because he received it fresh from the rock, and before it was mingled with the waters of the pool. The account given of the spot by travellers partly agrees with this, for it seems that the spring issues from between the stones of a wall, above the bath.

Dr. Doddridge thinks that in consequence of the Jews making so ungrateful a return to Christ for this miracle, the healing virtue of Bethesda was lost, and he observes that though the evangelist speaks of the pool as still at Jerusalem, when he wrote, yet he mentions "the descent of the angel" as a thing which had been, but not still continuing. See John v. ii. and iv. and this may account for the silence of Josephus concerning the pool of Bethesda, who in several cases seems to have been afraid of disgusting his pagan readers by relating any thing supernatural or marvellous.

angel\* at a certain season should move the waters, after which whosoever stepped first in was cured of his infirmity. This poor man had laboured thirty-eight years under his distemper, and waited every season for an opportunity of getting first into the pool, but still was prevented by some one or other of the hospital, who got in before Jesus seeing him lying under so many years disappointment, had compassion on him, and asked him, Wilt thou be made whole? The poor cripple supposing he would have offered him his assistance to get into the pool, told him he had no one to help him into the water. But Jesus meant him a more immediate cure, for he commanded him to rise, take up his bed, and walk. The man was immediately made whole, and, as his heavenly physician commanded, took up his bed, and prepared to walk to his This cure happened to be wrought upon the Sabbath; and therefore the Jews took occasion from thence to quarrel with the man that was cured, telling him that it being the Sabbath he could not answer for carrying his bed. But he, greatly delighted with, and entirely depending on the power and authority of the person who had cured him, tells the malicious Jews, that he that had cured him gave him authority to carry his bed. They asked him who that was: but the man knew not; for Jesus had withdrawn himself. Soon after, seeing the man in the temple, and suspecting, or perhaps seeing something irregular in his demeanor, he gives him this preventive admonition, "Behold, thou art whole now; sin no more, lest a worse evil happen unto thee." The man now well

<sup>\*</sup> Angel. The sick person was to go into the pool immediately upon the moving or troubling the waters; which must signify, that just upon the moving they had a force, which soon cooled or decayed again by the sinking of that which was stirred up, or by the evaporation of it. All which, if it be a natural, and no miraculous way of curing, it will be the more unlikely that the word Angel should here signify an Angel of God. For it may easily be supposed that there was an officer or servant sent down by them that had any skill in it, to trouble the waters at a fit time; and being a messenger sent before, as it were, to prepare for the sick man's coming after him, might well be called Angelos, not an angel, but a messenger, which the word in Greek properly signifies.

knowing his physician, told the Jews he met, that it was Jesus who had healed tim; which so enraged them that they sought to slay him: for this offence seemed double to the Jews, both working a cure, which they thought unlawful on the Sabbath, and also commanding the man to carry his bed. To this exception of theirs against him, because he cured on the Sabbath, Jesus made this reply: "God\* my Father, from whose rest you take the celebration of the Sabbath, did not so rest from all work on the Sabbath; but that ever since he hath done works of providence, of preservation and mercy every day: and why may not I his Son do so without exception, my Father's actions and mine being the same?" This the Jews, that knew the Son of God must be of the divine nature, and therefore equal with God, interpreted to be blasphemy in him, whom they believed not to be the Messiah, and therefore ought to be punished with death. To this exception of theirs against Christ, he answered, " Although I affirm myself to be the Son of God, and so am rightly concluded by you to be equal with my Father, yet this is far from being impiety in me, far from opposing myself against God, for I do nothing but what is the express will of my Father; and therefore it was reasonable for me to say† what I did, that my Father's actions will justify me in doing the same. For out of the infinite love my Father bears to me, he communicates all things to me, and by that means you are likely to have greater matter of wonder than the curing of this sick man on the Sabbath can' amount to; for even to the raising of the dead, (which is far greater than that of curing the sick) my Father hath communicated his power to me; and as my Father raiseth, so will I whomsoever I please; and for the office of judging angels or men, my Father doth it not himself, but hath put all power into the Son's hand. According to this you must be hypocrites, to pretend that you zealously honour the Father, when you despise and dishonour me, who am sent with this power on purpose to

<sup>\*</sup> God. See John v. from ver. 17, to the end of the chapter.

<sup>†</sup> Say. John. v. 17.

be honoured by all men, in the same manner as my Father is honoured, that so I may work a reformation among you. This is so perfectly the will of my Father, that I must tell you that on your hearkening at this time to me, and believing and entertaining my doctrine as the message of God, depends your eternal welfare. assure you, this power, which God my Father hath given me at this time, extendeth to the greatest things, even to raising the dead out of their graves, which ye shall shortly see exercised by me: for as God hath of himself power to give life, so hath he given this power to me, and I possess it. And as I am God, my Father hath given me all power and authority both now and hereafter. Wonder not at what I say; for there shall certainly be a time of general resurrection for the dead, a specimen of which shall shortly be seen among you. The righteous shall have their bodies and souls united in bliss, and the wicked have also a restitution of their bodies to receive their punishment and sentence. My judgment is righteous and agreeable to the method and decree of my Father, that they who believe on me shall be saved, and they that reject me shall be condemned. This my Father hath declared; and therefore it is not seeking honour or revenge to myself that I say or do this, but going according to the will of my Father. Ye know there is another that beareth witness of me; and for a proof thereof ye sent to John, who baptized me, when the Spirit descended on me; and he saw it, and testified to you the truth of it. He was Elias, being like fire, and his word like a burning lamp, and for a while ye rejoiced to hear him; but as soon as he testified of me, then ye presently rejected him. Ye look into and examine the Old Testament, whereon ye depend, and believe, through the performance of the Mosaical law, ye shall have eternal life; but on examination ye will find all those prophecies are types, and fulfilled in me, and that all the promises of life therein have an aspect to the Giver of life. But though ye look on these as the repository of your present and future bliss, and though they direct you to me as the only means to attain it, yet re wilfully reject me, and consequently that happiness,

Alas! It is not your good opinion or approbation that I contend for, while I thus speak: ye have not the love of God in you, and therefore ye reject me. Consider the unreasonableness of your actions: I bring my commission from God, and ye regard it not; yet if another, without any commission from God, a mere counterfeit, in his own name come and undertake to seduce you,\* What multitudes of you Jews will follow him? 'Tis not possible you should believe aright, that are so much in love with the praise of men, as to take him for a prophet who hath no other testimony of himself that he is so, but his own, or the voice of other men, and dare not believe on me; the rulers for fear of the people, and the people for fear of the rulers; and in the mean while both contemn the. favour and approbation of God, and set his testimony at nought, and reject me who come authorised with it. Tis not so much I, to whom you have done this affront, and therefore I shall not bring any complaint against you before the Father; but it is your own prophet Moses, on whom you pretend so much to depend, that will rise up in judgment, and testify against you. Had you believed Moses, that prophet whom ye seem so much to value, his predictions and typical representations would have led you to believe on me, in whom they are all completed. But if your own Moses cannot prevail with you, I can expect to carry no weight or authority with you."

Here was an excellent admonition, mixed with love and reproach; terror and tenderness; and though the very worst that the Jews could make of it, must needs terminate in their own good, yet the plainer he spake the more stupid and unintelligent they are; and the more affectionately he

invites them, the more stubbornly they reject him.

Upon the first second-day sabbath, that is, the ordinary sabbath happening in the passover week, probably the very

<sup>\*</sup> Seduce you. Alluding probably to Simon Magus, or Judas, of Galilee; the former deceiving the Jews with his pretended miracles; the latter, under pretence of patriotically delivering his countrymen from the Roman yoke, and that it was unlawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, led 4000 of them into the wilderness, where they were all slain by the Romans. In all this admirable discourse, our blessed Lord shews the Jews, that he came to establish a kingdom not of this world.

sabbath that was honoured with the cure of the paralytic who lay in Bethesda, Jesus and his disciples passed through the corn fields near Jerusalem, attended by some of the Pharisecs. But the latter, seeing the disciples pluck the ears, and cat as they walked, reproved them, and complained of them to their master, not for having taken what they had no right to, the law authorising them to do this (Deut. xxiii. 25,) but for having broken the sabbath by servile work, such as they supposed plucking and rubbing the ears to be. Luke vi. 1, "And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields: and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did cat, rubbing them in their hands." This accusation was levelled chiefly against Jesus himself for having as they imagined neglected to instil a due reverence of the sabbath into the minds of his disciples. But he easily repelled it by putting the Pharisees in mind of David, who, though a prophet as well as a king, in a case of necessity, ate the sacred shew-bread contrary to the law, Lev. xxiv. 9, and of the priests in the temple, who killed the sacrifices on the sabbath day, and by desiring them to consider a passage, in Hosea, where God declares that he has greater pleasure in mercy than in sacrifice; and by explaining unto them the end of the sabbath itself, which was instituted for the benefit, and not for the detriment of mankind.—He began with David's action in the matter of the shew-bread. which the High-Priest himself was accessary to, which the Scriptures record with no mark of disapprobation, and which it seems the doctors never had condemned, and for that reason was a proper vindication of the disciples in the like circumstances, Mark ii. 25, "And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need and was an hungered, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar\* the

<sup>\*</sup> Abiatbar. In the history, the priest from whom David received the shew-bread is called Ahimelech: and it is generally agreed that he was the High-Priest, because Doeg accused him of enquiring of the Lord for David, (1 Sam. xxii. 10,) a thing which none but the High-Priest having on the ephod could do. If that be true, Ahimelech must have been the High-Priest, because he himself confessed that he had often enquired of the Lord formerly without blame, ver. 15. Accordingly Josephus calls him the High-Priest several times.

High-Priest, and did eat the shew-bread, which is not lawful to eat, but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? The house of God, into which David went for the shew-bread, was not the tabernacle, for none but priests could go in thither. But it was the house of the High-Priest, situated beside the court of the tabernacle, and called the house of God on that account. Thus the apartment in which the High-Priest Eli and his servant Samuel slept, is called "the house of the Lord," 1 Sam. iii. 15.—Matt. xii. 5, "Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?" did not mean that these words are to be found in the law, but that they might read in the law how that the priests were obliged on the sabbath-days to perform such servile work in the temple, as considered separately from the end of it, was a profanation of the sabbath, and yet were guiltless, because it was necessary to the public worship, on account of which the sabbath was instituted. From Numb. xxviii. 9, it appears, that besides the continual burnt-offering, the priests were obliged on the sabbaths to sacrifice two lambs extraordinary, by which their servile work was that day double of what it was on the other days of the week. This, though really no profanation of the sabbath, might according to the common notion of the Jews be so termed; and therefore in speaking of it our Lord calls it so.—" But I say unto you, that in this place is one greater than the temple." " And he said unto them, the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath," Mark ii. 27. sabbath was contrived for the benefit and relief of man, being instituted in commemoration of the creation of the world finished in six days, and to perpetuate unto the latest ages the knowledge of this grand truth, that the world was made by God, in opposition both to atheism and idolatry, the sins which mankind have ever been apt to run into. It was instituted also that men abstaining from all sorts of labour but such as are necessary to the exercises of piety and charity might have leisure for meditating on the works of creation, wherein the perfections of God are fairly delineated; and that by

these meditations they might acquire, not only the knowledge of God. but a relish of spiritual and divine pleasures flowing from the contemplation of God's attributes, from the exercises ... the love of God, and from obedience to his commandments. It is thus that men are prepared for entering into the heavenly rest, of which the earthly sabbath is an emblem. To conclude, among the Israelites it was appointed to keep up the remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt, and for the comfort of their slaves and beasts, humanity to both being especially incumbent upon a people, who had once groaned under the heaviest bondage. From all which it is evident, that to burden men, much more to hurt them, through the observation of the sabbath, which has no intrinsic excellency in itself, is to act quite contrary to the design of God in appointing it. "Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath," Mark ii. 28. Since the sabbath was instituted for the benefit of man, the observation of it in cases of necessity may be dispensed with by any man whatsoever, but especially by me who am lawgiver of the Jewish commonwealth, and can make what alterations in its institutions I think fit. This argument, drawn from the consideration of his own dignity, our Lord largely insisted on when he he was prosecuted for a pretended profanation of the sabbath by the cure which he performed at Bethesda, John v. ver. 17, 30, 45.

But this was talking to the deaf winds; neither reason nor religion will give them satisfaction; they are so enraged that nothing but his destruction will satisfy them. Jesus therefore knowing the wickedness of their hearts, withdrew from Jerusalem, and returned to Galilee, whither the Scribes and Pharisees pursue him; their keenscented malice will not allow him to rest, but followed him wherever he went, observing every action, especially whether he would do that which they called the profanation of their sabbath, by performing acts of mercy on that day. Their malice was soon gratified with an opportunity: for entering into one of the synagogues of Galilee upon the sabbath, he cast his eye upon a man\*

Man. St. Jerome reports this man to have been a mason.

whose right-hand was withered. Here was an object offered to his compassion, which never failed to exert itself, especially on such a deplorable occasion. The quick-sighted malice of his enemies soon snatched at the opportunity; and lest he should not answer their end, they start the question first, asking him, whether it was lawful to heal on the sabbath-day? Jesus knew their thoughts, and had an answer ready for them: but first confronted them with the object, bidding the man with the withered hand stand forth in the midst of the assembly, that every one might see him. This object was sufficient to move pity in any but a Jewish breast, and rather put the whole congregation upon an address and petition of imploring help from the heavenly physician upon this poor man, than to make him an occasion of ensnaring and accusing him. Jesus therefore put the question to them, making the case partly their own: "Is it lawful," says he, "on the sabbath-day to do good, or to do evil? To save life, or to destroy it?" This was so apposite to the present circumstance, and so convictive of their malicious design upon him, that they had nothing to say for themselves. But Jesus pursued his argument with a closer and more immediate application to themselves. "Which of you," says he, " shall have a sheep fallen into a pit on the sabbath-day, and will not lift it out? How much better then is a man than a sheep?" From whence he draws this plain conclusion, "Wherefore is it lawful to do good on the sabbath day?" And knowing the hardness of their hearts, he waited not for an answer, but hastens to the relief of the poor sufferrer, commanding him to stretch forth his hand; which he did, and it was restored whole as the other. Upon this act, being confirmed in their malice, the Pharisees went forth, and with the Herodians,\* conspired the death of him who came to offer them eternal life.

<sup>\*</sup> Herodians. Tertullian, Chrysostom, Jerome, and others, erroneously affirm, that the Herodians were a sect of people who said Herod was the Messiah, because by a decree of the Roman senate, when the sceptre departed from Judah, he was declared king. But it is very improbable that thirty years after Herod's

As the Jews never doubted but the Messiah would by the sword bear down all that opposed him, it must have been very mortifying to the disciples, now that they saw their master flee before such an handful of enemies. But the evangelist observes, that this gentleness of disposition was a necessary part of the Messiah's character, having been predicted by Isaiah, "But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; and charged them that they should not make him known. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet," saying, (ch. xlii. 1,) "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.\* He shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets." Though the Messiah might easily bear down his enemies by force of arms, he shall not strive with martial violence, nor sound the alarm of war in the field of battle, neither shall his voice be heard in the streets, as of an enraged general sacking a conquered town. Agreeably to this prophecy, though Jesus, by the assistance of the wondering crowds that attended him wherever he went, in constant readiness to support him, could have crushed all his adversaries at once, he never made use either of them or of his miraculous power for such purposes, but discharged the duties of his mission with all meekness, gathering in his subjects, and overcoming his enemies not with arms, but the force of

death, there should be any who believed that Herod was the Messiah. The Herodians therefore here mentioned, were followers of Herod, in opposition to those that acknowledged and adhered to the Cæsarean or Roman authority, which the Pharisees generally looked upon as an usurpation. And yet the Herodians were not a distinct sect from the Pharisees and Sadducees, as appears by comparing, Mat. xvi. 16, with Mark viii. 15.

<sup>\*</sup> Gentiles. The word \*\*gests in this and the following verse may signify "holiness," fitly called "judgment," because it is the most genuine effect of reasoning or judgment. This sense the word \*\*gests or judgment has evidently, Ps. \*\*xxxvii. 6, "He will bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment (holiness) as the noon-day."

truth. And when his enemies attacked him, instead of making resistance he silently withdrew, being utterly averse to popular commotions. This latter branch of the prophecy relates evidently to after ages. " And in his name shall the Gentiles trust." The original, prophecy runs thus: "And the isles shall hope in his law." But the meaning of both passages is the same. For the evangelist uses the name of God here with that latitude of signification which it has in the Hebrew language, where it denotes the Deity himself, his perfections, his worship, his laws, and in one word every thing relating to religion. Thus, the Lord says of Saul newly converted, "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles," Acts ix. 15. Farther, in the language of the Old Testament, the Isles commonly denote the idolatrous nations to the west of Judea, inhabiting the islands of Greece and Italy. The prophet's meaning therefore is, that the heathen nations, charmed with the humanity and gentleness of the Messiah's disposition, the equity of his government, and the beauty and rectitude of his laws, shall trust in him, or obtain for themselves protection and safety by becoming his subjects.

But hitherto their malice could not reach him, he had not yet finished the work his Father sent him to do: he. therefore, knowing their impious designs on his life, departed from thence again, and went toward the sea-coast, the number of people increasing wherever he went, as his fame did; for he was now followed by new multitudes from Galilee, from Judea, from Jerusalem, from Idumea, from beyond Jordan, from about Tyre and Sidon; who, in all quarters, hearing the report of his miraculous power to cure all diseases by the word of his mouth, the touch of his hand, or merely of his garment, came with their sick and possessed for help, who pressed hard on him but to touch him, and they were all immediately cured of their distempers. Nay, his fame so increased, that the very devils and unclean spirits publicly confessed that he was the Son of God, till they were upon all occasions restrain-

ed, and compelled to silence.

The multitude thronging from all parts, and daily increasing, he commanded a ship to be in readiness against any inconvenience or troublesome pressures of the peo-

ple: after which he went up into a mountain to pray, and continued in prayer all night, intending to make the first ordination of apostles; which the next day he did, choosing out of the number of his disciples these twelve to be apostles,\* Simon Peter and Andrew, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon the zealot, Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot. Having thus chosen, he instructed them in the mysterious parts of his holy doctrine; and seeing a great multitude of people who were his constant followers, he went up into a mountain, where in a more eminent manner he entered upon his prophetic office, and addressed himself in general to the apostles and the multitude; pronouncing the blessing of the kingdom of heaven on the humble and lowly; comfort to those that mourn for their sins; protection and security of life to those that live quietly and meekly; complete and perfect satiety to those appetites that spiritually hunger and thirst after righteousness; compassion and mercy to those that are tenderly and pitifully affected towards the miseries and wants of the distressed; the beatifiek vision, (or sight of God) to those that have not defiled their souls with fleshly lusts and worldly impurities; the portion and blessing of the children of God to those that love and labour for peace; the martyr's glorious crown to those that suffer for the discharge of a good conscience, and everlasting praises to those that patiently bear the calumnies and reproaches of the wicked for Christ's

Afterwards giving particular instructions to his apostles

<sup>\*</sup> Apostles. The word Apostle in general signifies Messenger, or sent; in which sense the Jews are said to have apostles, whom they deputed to act as their proxies or deputies: whence the Jewish proverb, "Every man's apostle is as himself;" that is, is his vicar or proxy, and what he doth as valid as if the person had done it himself. And in this sense the twelve after Christ's departure had others, whom they sent to act for them in their charge, and whom they called their apostles.

In an evangelical sense the word Apostle signifies primarily that office whereunto the twelve were set apart by Christ immediately; as also that of St. Paul and Barnabas, sent by the special appointment of the Holy Ghost, Acts xiii. 2; secondarily, it belonged to some others after, that received the like commission from the twelve, or St. Paul.

and disciples, together with their commissions, being now about to send them abroad, he says, "You my disciples, and all real christians, are the salt of the earth; ye are those that by your doctrine, exemplary piety, and charity, are to keep the world from putrifying: but if your lives grow unsavoury by corrupt living, ye will be the most unprofitable, and contemptible creatures in the world; will be the refuse of the earth, and dealt with accordingly. Ye are the light of the world, like a city set on a hill, which is seen by all that travel near it, and by them inquired after what it is; so the church of Christ which is a most conspicuous society, cannot fail being taken notice of by the rest of the world, and either attract them by their good, or discourage them by their bad examples. It is my design in you to set up a torch or luminary, that by the doctrine which ye shall preach, and the exemplary lives ye are to lead, shall direct all others in the actions of their lives. Let vour light therefore so shine before men, that you may recommend to all others the practice of your honest, honourable and pious actions. I come not to take any thing away from the moral duties prescribed in the law, or by the prophets, but to repair and make up whatsoever is wanting; to restore what hath been taken from it by false interpretations. Whosoever by his practice or doctrine went about to diminish the obligation of one of the least commands of the law, he shall be thought unworthy of having his name registered in the catalogue of Christians here, or saints hereafter. But whosoever shall practise and teach others the duties of it, shall be advanced to the dignity of judging others, and to the glory attending it in heaven. Except your righteousness shall exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Moses delivered to the Jews, that they should commit no murder, and that he who did should be obnoxious to capital punishment: but I say, the law is short in this, for whoever is angry with his brother without a cause, \* or calls him racha, or fool, shall

<sup>\*</sup> Without a cause. The prophets and apostles, and Jesus Christ himself, in citing the writings of Moses, do seldom or never express his very words, thinking it sufficient to give the true sense or meaning of them. Thus Moses compared to the compared to t

be in danger of judgment, or of the council, or of hell-fire. Presume not therefore to approach the altar with thy peace-offering, unreconciled to thy brother. Be not litigious, lest thy adversary accuse thee before the judge, and thou be east into prison. The law forbids adultery, but I say, he that looks lustfully on a woman, that gazes intemperately on a beautiful face, hath for his part made himself guilty of adultery. Thou hadst better be without thy hand or thy eye (though never so useful instruments of nature) than to be ensnared by them. Thou shalt not put away thy wife but for fornication, otherwise thou makest her commit adultery. All voluntary swearing, though by the meanest thing or creature, is interdicted thee: and in thy common conversation thou shalt use no more than a bare affirmative or negative, yea, or no.\*

mands, "to serve the Lord," but our Saviour makes no scruple to add the word only," which is likewise to be extended to the precept of worshipping him, as the devil himself did acknowledge. Nay, it is sometimes absolutely necessary, for making up a complete sense, to supply some words which have gone before, or follow after. As when our Saviour in this place says, "Be not angry with thy brother without a cause," and afterwards in the same verse forbids to call him, "cursed wretch, or racha," that is, to give him ill or reproachful names, it is plain that we are to add "without a cause." For our Saviour himself, whose life was a comment upon his doctrine, was often angry, and treated the Pharisees and Sadducees more than once with the worst of names, calling them blind, fools, whited sepulchres, hypocrites, and children of the devil; which he cannot be supposed to do without a cause.

\* No. The particular forms of swearing here-mentioned, were usual among the Jews in their ordinary conversation, but they did not look upon them as binding: (See Whitby in Loc.) Hence they allowed their use, pretending there was no evil in them, because the law which forbade them to forswear themselves, and enjoined them to perform their oaths, meant such solemn oaths only, as were of an obligatory nature. It is this detestable morality which Jesus condemns, ver. 34, "But I say unto you, Swear not at all." Never use any oath on the supposition that it does not bind you, for all oaths whatever, those by the lowest of the creatures not excepted, are obligatory. If these oaths have any meaning at all, they are an appeal to the great Creator, and imply a solemn invocation of his wrath: whoever, therefore, breaks his oath, is guilty of perjury.

But our Lord's design appears to be, not to forbid the use of an oath, in a grave and solemn manner before a magistrate, for the Scripture allows this to be the best method of ending controversies, Heb. vi. 16, and a high act of religious worship, Deut. vi. 13, Isa. lxv. 16, "But let your communication be Yea, yea,

Oppose not violence to the injurious man, but whoever shall use thee contumeliously, bear\* it patiently: patience for the present, and dependance on God's providence for the future, best become a christian. If any one by suit at law shall endeavour to rob thee of thy meaner or inner garment, do thou rather than oppose violence to his injustice, suffer the loss of thy upper better garment: and whoever shall make thee got and carry his burden a little way, do thou again, rather than permit thy passion to oppose violence to this injury, or light invasion of thy liberty, suffer as much more. Do not proudly or disdainfully turn away from him that asks a favour of thee. Moses's precept indeed concerning the kind dealing of the Jews with other men, extended not universally to all, but peculiarly to their own countrymen and fellow Jews (called the sons of thy people) but to aliens; and enemies they were not bound to be kind; but I say unto you, love your enemies, return blessings and prayers for curses and reproaches; for if you have ordinary charity for them that have the same to you, what reward can ye expect from God for so doing? The worst sort of men in the world will do so; and ye do not distinguish yourselves from the common people. Therefore I require of you that will be my disciples, that you exercise your charity, whether of the lowest or highest sort, and extend it as far as the mercy of God is extended, to enemies as well as friends, that in so do-

Nay, nay:" that is, in your common conversation with each other, maintain such a regard to truth, as to make any invocation of the name of God needless; " for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil," or, " cometh from the evil one.'

See Dr. Macknight's Harmony.

<sup>\*</sup> Bear. To turn the cheek is a proverbial saying, and signifies bearing a wrong or injury patiently.

<sup>†</sup> Go. What we render "go a mile," is a Persian word and custom, which signifies "to take up men," as we take up horses to carry our burdens from stage to stage; which when one hath performed, another is taken up in his stead for the next stage.

<sup>†</sup> Aliens. The Jews were obliged by the law of Moses to be kind and friendly to foreigners, though they were commanded to treat the Seven Nations in an hostile manner.

ing you may be perfect,\* as your Father in heaven is

perfect.

Be not charitable for the sake of applause, for thereby you will lose the reward which God in heaven hath laid up for the almsgiver. But when thou dost any act of mercy, do it not vain-gloriously, but privately, and thou wilt certainly enjoy the reward of thy secret piety, which God will openly bestow on thee in the sight of

men and angels.

When thou addressest thyself to God in prayer, affect not popular hypocrisy, in exposing thyself to the view of the multitude, that thou mayest be admired of them; but retire from worldly company into thy closet, and with thy door shut to thee, pray thus in secret to thy heavenly Father who, though he be invisible, yet seeth thee, and will publickly reward thy private devotion. Avoid vain repetitions, and lengthen not thy prayers with idle tautologies, after the manner of the heathen, who think they shall have their prayers granted for the multiplicity of words used by them in their devotions. Be not therefore like them, for your Father hath no need of information concerning your wants, and is not likely to be wrought on by the length of your prayers. therefore set you a pattern, after which you shall form your prayers. When ye pray, say, Our Father t which

<sup>\*</sup> Perfect. To imitate or equal God in all things is impossible, and in some things presumptuous; but in acts of mercy, charity, and the like, we are expressly commanded to imitate him, as far as human nature will permit.

<sup>+</sup> Devotion. Our Lord certainly did not mean to discountenance public worship, for he frequently sanctioned it by his own example; but he cautions his disciples against the practice of the hypocrites, who, at the hours of public prayer, took care to shew themselves in the market, or some other place of general concourse, that others might witness their devotions; this was a vanity extremely offensive to God.

<sup>‡</sup> Our Father. This prayer is distinct from that in St. Luke xi. 2, for this in St. Mat. vi. 9, is part of Christ's admirable Sermon on the Mount; but that in St. Luke upon a special motion of the disciples, at a time when he had done praying; who seeing him often retire to pray, desired him to give them a Form of Prayer, which they might constantly use, as John Baptist had given to his disciples. This

art in heaven; hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Imitate not the hypocrites in fasting,\* who put on mournful looks, and appear in foul garments, that they may be thought to be in earnest; but behave thyself as upon another day, that thou appear not unto men to fast,

but unto God.

Lay not up any worldly treasure, which is liable either to rust, vermin, or thieves; but lay up treasure in heaven, where it will be for ever safe. Where covetousness hath taken possession, there is nothing but darkness; for liberality and charity are extinguished by it; and that which tends to the inordinate increase of riches, cannot be reconcileable with the service of God.

Be not anxious or solicitous for the future; it is doubting of the providence of God, who will not fail to supply our necessities, if we trust in him. The fowls of the air are a great instance of his care, who provide nothing, and

yet enjoy every thing.

Be not hasty in judging others, lest thou fall under their more severe censure. Why shouldst thou reflect so sharply on the faults of others, who art more liable to their censure for thine own follies? Be cautious in reproving the incorrigible, who will be apt to reproach thee for thy charitable love, as swine † undervalue precious jewels, and dogs bite those that feed them. Apply yourselves to God in prayer for what you want, which will be a sure way of obtaining it. Enter in at the strait gate; let all your care be to set yourselves upon the Christian course, be it ever so strict (for it is easy to enter on a

prayer in St. Matthew was in the second year after Christ's baptism; that in St Luke in the third.

<sup>\*</sup> Fasting. The Jews anointed and washed themselves every day, except in time of mourning.

<sup>+</sup> Swine. Matt. vii. 6.

vicious course, and go through with it, and there are multitudes that pass that way to eternal destruction.) But the gate that leadeth to life being strait, there will be need of all your care, because the entrance and whole course of a Christian's life is made up of perfect strictness, in opposition to the looseness of the world; and that makes so few to choose it.

Beware of false prophets and teachers, who pretend the greatest innocence and meekness, but design the contrary. Ye will discover them by their practices: for when they have gained some esteem with you, they will endeavour to corrupt you; for it is not every one who acknowledgeth me as his Lord and master, that shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. At the day of judgment many will say to me, Lord, we are the men whom thou by thy power hast enabled to cast out devils, and to do all kinds of miracles. But I shall tell such, I never knew them.

Whosoever believeth and entertaineth all these things, and practiseth them, is like a prudent builder, who laid the foundation of his house upon a rock, which wind and weather could no way affect with injury or damage. But he that heareth these things, and practiseth them not, shall by all men be reputed to be like the man who built his house upon the sand, which was soon blown down by the stormy winds, and washed away by the floods."

Our blessed Lord having finished his sermon\* on the Mount, the people were astonished at him, for he de-

<sup>\*</sup> Sermon. The contents of this discourse deserve our most serious regard. Our Lord begins it, like the great High-Priest, blessing his people: but he strikes at the root of that error which generally prevailed among the Jews concerning the expected kingdom of the Messiah, describing its blessings as all of a spiritual nature, and the subjects of it as possessing those holy dispositions to which the several blessing mentioned are annexed.

In the next place he declares, that he did not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil them, not to contradict the revelation already made, but to unfold the grand scheme and perfect the whole. Accordingly he answered the types of the ceremonial law. He explained and enforced the moral law; he completed the design of all former dispensations; and supplied their defects. Our Lord also

livered his doctrine with extraordinary authority and power, (prophetic at least, which since the prophet Malachi's time had been interrupted) and not with that indifference which was practised by the doctors of the law among the Jews.

Nor did the multitudes resort to him only for the sake of his doctrine, but also of the miraculous cures, which he daily wrought among them; which had so spread and increased his fame, that all that were afflicted with any disease or malady, if they could but approach him, doubted not of a cure. Among the admiring crowds which continually flocked about him, a poor leprous wretch all over crusted with ulcers, threw himself at the feet of the divine physician, imploring his help, and with a faithful assurance depending on his ability to restore him to his health, if he would be pleased to make use of his power. Our Saviour looking on the poor leper with pity; confirms his faith by an instant cure; at the same time commanding him to make an acknowledgment of the great blessing he had received, by addressing himself to the priest, as the law prescribed, and to present the offering required of all such as are thus cleansed of le-This our Saviour said to him with design, that it might by this means be a testimony to assure them that he was the true Messiah, and that he did not oppose the law given by Moses, but came to fulfil it. The joyful leper, with cheerful obedience retires, and our blessed Lord enters Capernaum, which he makes a fresh scene of his miraculous performances: for he is no sooner discovered to be in any place, but immediate application is made to him for his divine assistance and the farther demonstration of his power.

guards his disciples against vain glory and love of the world, and concludes with a variety of practical directions and exhortations. Such was the import of this most instructive and awakening discourse. We, as well as those who heard it, may justly be astonished at his doctrine; but it is incumbent upon us, not only to admire it, but to apply it to ourselves, remembering that every precept is obligatory on all who call themselves Christ's disciples.

In Capernaum, the Holy Jesus received the address of a faithful Centurion,\* or captain, in behalf of his favourite servant, who was grievously afflicted with the palsy. Our blessed Lord, always as ready to afford relief, as the sick were to receive it, proposeth to the centurion the honour of his immediate presence to visit and heal his servant; which the faithful commander, with much humility, declines; for, being unwilling to give him the trouble of coming in person, he desires only his sacred fiat, the word of command, firmly believing that the cure would be per-For through the strength of his faith he was fully assured of the excellency and divinity of his Saviour; and therefore, though himself was a man of authority, he thought it too great an honour for his earthly habitation to be visited by the great Saviour of the world. Jesus, ‡ with pleasure and admiration observing the believing captain, turns to his disciples, to whom he with much carnestness of asseveration expresses himself, assuring them, that he had not found any Jew so fully persuaded of his power, as this Gentile centurion. But this which is now so very admirable, will within a short time be frequently exemplified; for multitudes shall come from all parts of the world, and believe in Christ, and shall sit down with Abraham, and the rest of the Patriarchs of the Jewish nation; t but the Jews themselves, to whom the Messiah was primarily sent, will disbelieve, and be punished accordingly; they will be shut out of the church here, and heaven hereafter. Then, turning to the centurion, who with joy and patience heard the discourse of Jesus, he pronounces the servant.cured, and dismisses the master, to the enjoyment

<sup>\*</sup> Centurion. He was a captain of the Iron Legion, which was usually quartered in Judea.

<sup>+</sup> Jesus. See Matt. viii. 10, 11, 12, &c.

<sup>†</sup> Nation. "To sit down (at table) with Abraham, &c." denotes, according to the phraseology of Scripture, the joys of heaven, under the idea of a sumptuous entertainment. For, though the felicity of the redeemed will certainly be of a spiritual nature, yet it is necessary to explain the nature of the life to come, by allusions to the affairs of the present life. The Greek poets represented divine pleasure under the notion of a feast; and feigned that Ixion was permitted to eat with the gods.

of that satisfaction which his faith had procured. The miraculous cure was in proportion to his faith; for returning, he found upon inquiry, that his servant recovered at the very same time that Jesus had declared it. Thus the servant received the blessing of health, as the reward and honour of his master's faith.

From Capernaum Jesus passing through Galilee attended with a great multitude of people, and as he came near the gates of Nain, was met by a crowd, mournfully attending the corpse of an only son of a widow, by which loss the mother was deprived of all her worldly comfort. Here was a proper object for divinity to exercise itself upon, and to which our blessed Saviour's compassion readily prompted him. To comfort the weeping parent, he approached the bier, bidding the widow forbear weeping, and commanding the bearers to stop; when, with his powerful word and touch, he raised the young man to life; who sitting up on the bier spake to the company, to convince them that he was indeed alive. To restore decayed health, and dispossess devils and impure spirits, were acts of wonder to all who beheld them; but to recover defunct nature, and to recall it from the hands of death, was so stupendous a prodigy, as struck the beholders not only with amazement, but fear; for they glorified God for visiting his people, by sending a great prophet among them; justly concluding from the grandeur of the action, that nothing but an Almighty power could effect such wonders.

Upon the fame of this and other miracles, which soon spread through all Judea, John the baptist, who was still in prison, sent two of his disciples to him, to give the greater publicity to his mission by inquiring if he were indeed the Messiah, or whether they were to expect another? At the very time of their asking this question, for their clearer conviction and proof of his being so, Jesus\* performed many miracles in their presence, curing several persons of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits, and unto many who were blind he gave sight. To these messengers therefore of John he returned answer, by

<sup>\*</sup> Yesus. See Luke vii. 21, 22, &c.

a demonstration of the nature of the thing, and the glory of the miracles, saying, "Return to John and tell him what you see; for the deaf hear, the blind see, the lame walk, the dead are raised, the lepers are cleansed, and to the poor the gospel is preached." All which were the grand characteristic notes of the Messiah, according to the

predictions of the holy prophets.\*

Our blessed Saviour having dismissed John's disciples with this answer, began to speak concerning John, bestowing encomiums on the austerity and holiness of his person, the greatness of his function, and the divinity of his commission: saying that he was greater than a prophet, a burning and shining light—the Elias who was to come, and the consummation and ending of the old prophets: adding withal, that the perverseness of that age was most notorious in the treatment of himself and the baptist: for neither could the baptist, who came neither eating nor drinking (that by his austerity and mortified deportment he might invite the judgment and affections of the people) nor Jesus, who came both eating and drinking (that by a moderate and affable life, framed to the common use and compliance of men, he might sweetly insinuate himself into the affections of the multitude) obtain belief amongst them. The obstinate Jews objected against every thing, and nothing could please them: but wisdom and righteous. ness had its friends in its own family, and is justified of all her children.

Then he proceeded to a more direct reprehension of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum; declaring to the two first, that if the mighty works which were done in them by him, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, (two heathen cities) they would long ago have repented; and therefore that the judgment or punishment which befals mere heathen cities, shall be lighter than what they could

<sup>\*</sup> Prophets. See Isa, xxxv. 5, 6. "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened," &c.

It was also predicted that he should instruct the poor; and it is plain that our Lord did not court the favour of the rich, like the heathen philosophers and Jewish doctors, but shewed a marked attention to the despised poor.

expect. And thou Capernaum, said he, the place of my abode, which hast been so honoured and favoured by me, beyond all other places, and hast received such spiritual advantages, shalt be brought to destruction suddenly, humbled as low as thou wert highly advanced; for if the miracles done in thee with design to reform thee, had been done in Lot's time, for the reforming Sodom and Gomorrah, they would have prevented their destruction by a

speedy repentance.

Having thus severely reprehended the three cities for their pertinacious continuance in their sins and infidelity, in defiance and reproof of all the mighty works which had been wrought in them, he takes occasion at the same time (probably from that of his being received by the meaner, and refused by the higher sort) to break out into an affectionate expression of thanks to God, that those mysteries of the gospel, which the wise men of the world despised (and were thereupon given up by God to their own wilful blindness) were yet by him revealed to the most ignorant and mean; by this denoting, that God had so disposed the way to heaven, that the most ignorant and humble, not the proud and elated, were most ready to receive and embrace it. This, said the blessed Jesus, is an act of thy free and undeserved mercy to some, O Lord, and of thy just deserving to others; and then he concluded this sermon with an invitation to all people wearied and disconsolate, loaden with sin and misery, to come to him, promising ease to their burdens and refreshment to their weariness, and to exchange their heavy pressures, "for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

The holy Jesus having concluded this sermon, a certain wealthy Pharisee, named Simon, invited him to dine with him: into whose house having entered, a woman\* that had lived a sinful and scandalous course of life, abiding there in the city, heard of it. She came to Jesus in the

<sup>\*</sup> Woman. There is good reason to believe that the woman here spoken of, was not Mary Magdalen, who was a person of eminent station and opulent fortune, being mentioned by St. Luke, ch. viii. even before Johanna, the wife of Herod's ateward. It is not likely that such a person should have been a prostitute.

Pharisee's house; not to feast her eyes with the sight of a miraculous and glorious person, but in remorse and regret for her sins. She came to the blessed Jesus to lay her burden at his feet; and as he lay along, she came behind him that lay next to Jesus, and standing there, let fall drops of tears upon his feet, the effects of sorrow and contrition; and stooping down, wiped them with her hair: she then fell down and kissed his feet, and poured a box of ointment upon them. This action was done in an ecstacy of love, sorrow, and adoration; a festival ceremony, becoming

the majesty of the greatest earthly monarch.

Whilst this poor sinner thus was busy in the expressions of her love and veneration to Jesus, Simon, in whom something of the perverse and peevish Pharisee still appeared, thought within himself, that Jesus could not be a prophet; otherwise he would have known this woman to be a sinuer,\* and not have suffered her to touch him. Jesus knowing, (for he understood his thoughts as well as his words) immediately made an apology for the woman and himself, in a question expressed in the parable of two debtors, to whom a greater and a less debt respectively were forgiven; both of them teaching that they would love their creditor in proportion to his mercy in forgiving their debts. In this parable, Jesus gave the reason of this woman's extraordinary expression of love and grief, and his reasons for not rejecting her. Then applying it to the woman, he reproved his host by distinguishing between his and the woman's entertainment; and concluding the parable with forgiveness of her sins; for she, who loved much, had much forgiven. This was so home and plain upon the proud Pharisee, that he might therein read his own, when it stood confronted with the magnificence of the woman's penitence and love; and dinner being over, Jesus dismissed the penitent with this blessing: "This great and affectionate expression of thy faith is rewarded with a free

<sup>•</sup> Sinner. Though the Jewish religion did permit harlots of their own nation to live and enjoy the privileges of their nation, except that their oblations were refused; yet the Pharisees, who pretended to a greater degree of sanctity than others, would not admit them to civil usages, or the benefits of ordinary society; and therefore Simon the Pharisee made this objection within himself.

pardon of all thy sins: Go, and live as thou oughtest to do for the rest of thy life, and God's favour and all happiness be with thee.

After this, Jesus attended by the twelve, with Mary Magdalen, Joanna, Susanna, and many others, who supplied him with necessaries out of their own possessions, went through the whole country, preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and coming into a house with a design to eat, he was so crowded by the people that he could not; and therefore he disposed himself to dispense his time to the necessities of those that stood in need of his help. Of which there were many and daily instances; and with one of which he was presented in the person of a poor demoniac, possessed with a blind and dumb devil; in whose behalf his friends intreated Jesus, that he would cast out the devil: which he immediately did, and the blind man saw, and the dumb spake; so much to the amazement of the people, that they ran in such immense numbers after him, and so offended the Pharisees, who thought that by means of this prophet, their reputation would be diminished, and their schools deserted, that first a rumour was industriously circulated among the people that Jesus was beside himself. On which report, his friends and kindred came together to see, and to make some provisions accordingly. When the mother and other relations of our Lord arrived, they found him in a house, incircled with a multitude of attentive hearers, who were filled with admiration. And there the holy Virgin-Mother might hear part of her own prophecy literally verified, "That the generations of the earth should call her blessed:" for a woman worshipping Jesus, cried, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee suck." To this Jesus replied, not denying her to be blessed, who had received the honour of being the mother of the Messiah, but rather advancing the dignity of spiritual blessings far above the greatest temporal honour in the world, he says; "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and perform it."

Our blessed Saviour being still in the house, they informed him that his mother and his brethren were wait-

ing for him without, upon which he told them that those relations were far inferior to the ties of duty and religion: for the dear names of mother and brother, which are sanctified by the laws of God and nature, are made far more sacred when a spiritual kindred supervenes. And therefore Christ, to signify this office of his to declare the will of his Father, to be dearer to him than all relations, and at the same time to shew that obedience to God was above all things most welcome to him, he tells them, that natural and secular considerations weighed nothing with him in comparison of the gaining Proselytes to heaven. turning to his disciples, he said, "Behold my mother and my brethren;" subjoining for a reason, "Whosoever doth the will of my Father which is in heaven proves thereby that he is a child of God, and consequently brother of Christ; on whom he setteth a greater value, than paying a civility to those who are, in carnal respects, nearer to him.

The Pharisees, who were always seeking for occasions of finding fault with our blessed Lord, observing that he still persisted in performing miracles, and particularly in casting out Demons, renewed the old accusation;—" He casteth out devils by Beelzebub." Which senseless objection Christ having already confuted, arraigned them solemnly with the guilt of an unpardonable crime; assuring them that their so charging those actions, which he performed by the energy of the divine Spirit, was a sin against the Holy Ghost. And however they might make bold with the Son of man,\* and though prevarica-

<sup>\*</sup> Son of Man. The phrase Son of Man, in Matt. xii. 32, belongs to Christ as he appeared in the weakness of human nature, the son of Mary, abstracted from the great power of his doctrine and miracles. The sin therefore against the Son of Man was pardonable; but the resisting and opposing (which is often expressed by speaking) the Holy Ghost was unpardonable.

The quality of the Son of Man is often very ambiguous; and therefore we must take these words, "Son of Man," in their proper signification, and retain them still where our Saviour is evidently understood, who has been pleased to take this title particularly to himself. Sometimes it signifies Jesus Christ, sometimes a man of low degree; as in Matt. viii. 10, and in Matt. xii. 32. This is likewise the sense of it, as many of the learned allow, in 1 Sam. ii. 25. But that which renders this interpretation more probable is this; that St. Mark makes no mention of the

tions against his words, or injuries to his person might, upon repentance, find pardon; vet it was a matter of greater consideration to sin against the Holy Ghost, for that would obtain no pardon here, or hereafter: and taking this occasion of reprehending the Jews for their obstinacy and ingratitude, he, by a mysterious and ingenious parable, gives the world a solemn caution against relapsing and backsliding after repentance: "To you," says he, "that having received such means of conversion and repentance, such miracles, and particularly casting out devils, have not yet duly improved by them, I shall now apply this parable, Matt. xii. 43, &c, the meaning of which is, that this nation (out of which I came to cast the power of Satan, to bind the strong man, and to take from him his usurped possessions) doth appear so resolute to resist all my methods, as to blaspheme that Holy Spirit by whom I work: and then what is to be expected, but that the devils ejected by me, in my Father's name, finding no where among the heathen such desirable habitations of rest and contentment as among you, shall endeavour to re-enter here, with others worse than themselves, and take a lasting possession? So the last estate of this people is likely to be more desperate than it was at first." On the same day our blessed Lord went to the sea-side,\* where being again encompassed with a vast concourse of people, he went on board a vessel, from whence he taught the people on the shore: but he taught them by parables, under which were hidden the mysteries of the kingdom of life. By the parable of the sower, scattering the seed by the way-side, and some on stony, some on thorny, and some on good ground, he intimated the several dispositions of men's hearts, the carelessness of some, the frowardness and levity of others, the easiness and soft-

blasphemy against the Son of Man, saying only that "all sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, Mark iii. 28, which shews that there is no question here of a particular sin against the Son of God, which St. Mark had not failed to have mentioned if any such thing had been designed by that expression.

<sup>\*</sup> Sea-side. This was the lake of Genesareth, otherwise called the sea of Tiberias, from a town of that name, which stood on the banks of the lake.

ness of a third, and how they are diverted from a believing reception of the word by worldliness and care; how many ways there are to miscarry, and that but one sort of men, out of several, receive the word, and bring forth the fruits of a holy life. But his disciples, wondering that he should speak so mystically and obscurely to the people, asked, him, why he did so? To whom he gave this answer: "To understand the deeper and more obscure parts of the gospel is a privilege only belonging to you disciples, who are believers already, and have given up yourselves to my direction; but these have not done so. Whosoever hath made use of the advantages given him by God, shall have more given him, as in the seed that fell on good ground, he shall have an abundant increase; but whosoever shall not make use of what he hath, and so by his own fault falleth into poverty; shall not only be denied more, but shall be deprived of what he hath; the means of grace shall be taken from him upon his wilful continuance in sin." This was the reason our Saviour gave his disciples for his speaking in parables, to which he subjoins another: "I spake, says he, to them in parables, because\* seeing they see

<sup>\*</sup> Because, &c. Though our blessed Lord spake to the people in the most plain. and intelligible manner, yet they were so stupid, as not to perceive and understand him. These texts of St. Matt. xiii. 13, St. Mark iv. 12, and St. Luke viii. 10, do in the Greek all agree; but are differently and wrongly translated in the English, and seem to make our Saviour speak to the multitude in parables, that is, in a plain and familiar way, that they may not perceive or understand them; which is contrary to the design of Christ's coming into the world, and continuing so long in it; which was to reform mankind, and, by his holy life and heavenly doctrine, to turn men from their wicked ways, and put them in the way that leads' to eternal happiness. The mistake in the translation must proceed from the false rendering the word ina in St. Mark, and St. Luke, which St. Matthew expresses by boti, both which words signify in this place because. That of St. Mark therefore ought literally to run thus: "because seeing they do see, and not perceive, and so on:" that of St. Luke thus; "because seeing they see not, and hearing they understand not." But St. Matthew is positively most expressive; "because they seeing see not, and so on." The natural import of which is, That the Jews, by reason of their prejudices, not being capable to understand high things, our Saviour, out of love to their souls, accommodates himself to their capacities, by speaking to them in parables; that is, in metaphors and similitudes borrowed from temporal and bodily things, to bring them to the understanding of his doctrine.

not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. By which was fulfilled what Isaiah the prophet foretold of God's dealing with an obstinate people, who would not receive or entertain the truth, though never so plainly represented to them. And this was a just judgment of God upon them for their former obstinacy, who shut their eyes, and stopped their ears, that they might not be converted; wherefore God, on his part, would, in his just judgment, withdraw such precious knowledge from them, that it

might not be exposed to farther contempt."

By the three parables of the seed growing together with the tares; of the mustard-seed swelling to a great tree; and of a little leaven qualifying the whole lump, our blessed Saviour signified the increase of the gospel under persecution and difficulties, and his blessing upon the apostolic word. By the kingdom of heaven he means the state of the gospel, which he likens to a man that sowed good seed, among which an enemy scattered tares, and which the servants offered to weed up; but the good man forbad it, because the tares are so mixed with the wheat, that one cannot be pulled up without endangering the other, especially when they are not perfectly discernible. Let them therefore both grow up together till the harvest, that is, till the day of judgment, when I will send the reapers, that is, will appoint angels as officers to separate the wheat from the tares, meaning the good from the wicked.

The state of the gospel is of such an increasing nature, both in the world, and in the heart of man, where it is received, that it is fitly compared to a grain of mustard seed; \* which being one of the least seeds, yet when it

<sup>\*</sup> Mustard. That a mustard-seed grows into a tree, is affirmed by St. Matt. xiii. 32, and St. Luke xiii. 19. Which must not be measured by what we see of this seed among us, but by considering the Hebrew soil and clime, of which this is ordinarily affirmed among their authors, who mention a bough of a mustard-tree that yielded wood enough to cover a little house. And whereas in St. Matthew it is said to be the least of all seeds, though among us other seeds may be found less than that, as rue and poppy, yet it does not necessarily follow it should be so there. However, it is apparent, that the smallness of it was proverbial among the Jews.

grows up prosperously, it becomes larger than any thing that comes from a seed, and among the Jews grows into a tree with boughs large enough for birds to roost and

lodge in.

Again, the gospel hath such a secret invisible influence on the hearts of men, to change and effect them and all their actions, that it is properly compared to leaven, which is so thoroughly mixed with the whole, that although it appeareth not in any part of it visibly, yet every

part hath a tincture from it.

By speaking thus in parables, our blessed Saviour fulfilled what was before spoken by the prophetic Psalmist.\* "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." After this, he dismissed the multitude, and retired into a house; where his disciples, taking the opportunity of privacy there, desire him to explain† the former parables to them, which he accordingly did, rendering them into their proper meanings, adding to them two parables more, concerning the dignity of the gospel: in the first of which he compares it to a treasure hid in a field, which a man finding casually hid it again, and con-

<sup>\*</sup> Psalmist. See Psalm lxxviii. 2.

<sup>+</sup> Explain. By our Saviour's explaining all things to his disciples, when he was alone with them, we may understand that he instructed them in private inhis doctrine, enlarged on the meaning of the parables, and likewise informed them of several other things which were neither necessary nor proper to be known by the multitude at that time: so that this expression of St. Mat. xiii. 11. " To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not," does not in the least imply, that our Saviour's parables were dark or obscure, and that by speaking to the multitude in them, he had a design to conceal any truth which was necessary to be known by them, but only that he made a fuller discovery of his doctrine to his disciples, than to the multitude; because his disciples were more disposed to receive it, and were afterwards to be the preachers of it, and to seal the truth of it with their blood. Nor is it any proof of the obscurity of our Saviour's parables, that the disciples did not understand some of them: for though they were honest and sincere, yet they were often at a loss in ordinary things, of which their not understanding the parable of the sower seems to be an instance, for which our Saviour upbraids them, saying, "Know ye not this parable? How then will ye know all parables?"

cealed it till he could get it into his possession by buying

the field, for which he accounts no price too dear.

. In the second parable, he compares the gospel to a jewel of vast price; for to those who have followed the study of wisdom and the practice of holiness, the gospel of Christ, is as welcome as a prize to a merchant, who being in pursuit of rich merchandize, and meeting with an inestimable jewel, disputes not the price, but immediately sells all that he hath in the world, and purchaseth it; telling his disciples withal, that although purity and spiritual perfection were intended by the gospel, yet they would not be acquired by every person; but that the public professors of christianity should be a mixed multitude, like a net inclosing fishes good and bad; which should finally be distinguished, the good to be preserved, and the bad to be cast away. Likewise the same distinction would be observed, not only at the time wherein, Christ should come to take revenge on his enemies at the destruction of the Jewish state, but especially at the final day of every man's doom, at the conclusion of the world. After these discourses, he retired into his own city of Nazareth, where he was bred, and taught the people publiely in their synagogues, which he did in an extraordinary manner, expressing such knowledge, and performing such miracles, that they who saw and heard him, were aniazed at them; and they that knew his birth and education amongst them could not but admire, saying, "Whence can he be imagined to derive the power of doing such miracles? Do we not know him, his parents, and relations?" The people of Nazareth did him no honour as a prophet: they regarded his birth here below, but not his commission from heaven; though he evinced plainly by his miraculous acts from whom he came: they would know him, in nothing but the disadvantages of his youth, kindred, trade, and poverty; still retaining in their minds the infirmities and humility of his first years, and keeping thesame apprehensions of him now a man and a prophet, which they had of him whilst a child in the shop of a carpenter. But when Jesus in his sermon had reproved their infidelity, at which he wondered, and therefore did but few miracles there compared with what he had done at Capernaum,

and had intimated the preference that Capernaum should have before Nazareth, they were so incensed at his just reproaches, that they resolved to destroy him; in order to which they thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which it was built, intending his execution by throwing him down head-long. But the great work for which he was sent, was not yet finished; and therefore to preserve himself for the performance of his Father's will, he miraculously saved himself by departing through the midst of them, who had not power, though

malice enough, to seize him.

Jesus having miraculously escaped the fury of his own countrymen, withdrew from ungrateful Nazareth, and travelled into Galilee, teaching in most of the towns and villages thereof, attended by his disciples, and certain women, out of whom he had cast unclean spirits, such as were Mary Magdalene, Johanna wife to Chuza, Herod's steward, Susanna, and some others, who attended him, and ministered to him out of their own substance, and became part of that holy society, which about this time began to be full; because now the apostles, whom our Saviour had sent out by two and two, were returned from their preaching, full of joy that the devils were made subject to the words of their mouth, and could no longer stand at the invocation of the holy name of Jesus. Having thus wrought miracles, and taught the people whereever they came, they began to be a little puffed up with their successful itinerancy, which their holy master perceiving, suppresses the rising vanity of their minds; and to destroy the vain conceits to which these miraculous actions of theirs had given birth, he intimated to them, that such privileges were not the solid foundation of a holy joy, any farther than as they co-operated toward the great end of God's glory, and their own salvation; to which they were chosen, their names being written in the book of life, on which account the highest degree of joy is reasonable, holy, and unchangeable.

It was now about a year since Herod\* had committed

<sup>\*</sup> Herod. Our translation and that of Geneva seem to represent Herod as a prince who respected John the Baptist, and had a great esteem for all he said,

John the Baptist close prisoner to the castle of Macheruns. lying all the while exposed to the fury and resentment of a malicious woman, who could not forgive the rebuke the Baptist gave to Herod, in telling him it was unlawful for him to have his brother's wife. In vain had Herodias racked her brain for an opportunity to destroy him for it, for Herod had not yet filled up the measure of his iniquity. But, after a year's waiting, a favourable occasion presented itself to complete her revenge. Herod's birth-day being solemnized with much mirth and gaiety, among other joyful entertainments nothing contributed so much to Herod's pleasure and satisfaction as the performance of Herodias's daughter in a dance: insomuch that Herod rashly promised her whatsoever she would ask, and confirming his promise with an oath. The damsel, not wicked enough of herself, consulted her impious mother, who as readily as maliciously instructed her daughter to demand the head of John Baptist: to obtain this she addresses herself to Herod, and demands the performance of his promise. Herod was now troubled\* indeed; variety of thoughts dis-

Mark vi. 20. Though by St. Matthew and St. John he is represented as a very wicked man, whom nothing but the fear of the people, that looked on John as a prophet, prevented putting him to death, Matt. xiv. 5, Luke iii. 19, 20. But we are to consider, that the Greek word Synetarei, which the Geneva version translates to reverence, and ours to observe, signifies "to keep prisoner," or " to observe or watch with an ill design." We must consider farther, that Robert Stephens, and Beza, had some Greek copies, where, instead of the words which we render "He did many things," there are words which signify "He was much vexed or troubled:" which indeed much better represent the temper of that dissolute prince. Josephus the historian observes, that Herod had put John Baptist to death, because he thought the people were altogether led by him; which is an argument that he did neither respect him, nor hear him gladly, nor do many things for love of him. The text then should be thus translated, " for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man, and holy, and he kept him prisoner, or kept a watchful eye over him, and having heard him he was much perplexed, though he heard him peaceably.

<sup>\*</sup> Troubled. The ancients were wont on their birth-day feasts to forbear all secular employments, to have no quarrels nor contentions, no pleadings in their courts, but especially no shedding of blood, no executions; counting it unfit to deprive any of life on the day they received their own. This therefore might be one

turbed him; not so much from the fear of doing an evil action in murdering a good man, but of the people's resentment, who had a high opinion of John's mission. However, because he had sworn, and that it might not appear from levity or inconsistency to those that were at the feast with him, he would not retract his promise, but sacrificed the Baptist to a rash vow, made in the gaiety of his riotous entertainment. John, being beheaded, his head\* was brought in a dish, and presented to the young girl,† who gave it to her mother. John's disciples hearing of this, took care of his burial,‡ which being done they came to Jesus, whose forerunner John was, and told him all that had befallen John, staying (it is probable) with Jesus as his disciples.

The miraculous cures which the apostles wrought, were soon spread around the country; but when those of our Saviour came to be divulged, the fame of them echoed through the palaces of princes; insomuch that cruel Herod, in all his greatness, was alarmed with anxious thoughts as soon as ever he heard the mighty character of Jesus, and the wonders he performed. His lethargic soul was roused from its sinful security, and his jealous apprehen-

of the occasions of Herod's sorrow or trouble for this demand of the girl.

<sup>\*</sup> Head. It has been said, that when Herodias had the head presented to her by her daughter Salome, she thrust the tongue through with a needle, and afterwards buried the head in her own palace, thinking, perhaps, to secure it against a re-union, lest it should disturb her unlawful lusts, and disquiet Herod's conscience.

<sup>†</sup> Girl. There is an ancient tradition, that this girl, who danced off the Baptist's head, passing over a frozen lake, the ice breaking, she fell in up to the neck, and that her head was parted from her body by the violence of the fragments of ice shaken by the water, and its own fall. Nor was it long before God's judgment reached the incestuous couple: for Aretas, a king in Arabia Petrca (whose daughter Herod had divorced, or put away for Herodias) making war with Herod for the affront offered to his daughter, defeated him: soon after which the adulterous pair were banished to Lyons in France by a decree of the Roman senate, where they lived ingloriously, and died miserably.

<sup>‡</sup> Burial. John was buried in Sebaste, in the confines of Samaria, having hisgrave between the bodies of Elizeus and Abdias the prophets.

sions were such as arose from his guilt: he thought it was John the Baptist who was risen from the dead, and that these mighty works were demonstrations of his power, increased by the super-additions of immortality, and more divine influences, proportioned to the honour of a martyr,

and a state of separation.

When Jesus heard of the barbarous treatment of John, that the same might not befal him before he had fulfilled the office for which he was sent, he departed by ship from thence, taking none but his disciples with him, and went to a place not inhabited. But he could not be long concealed any where; for the people hearing where he was, though in an inhospitable desert, flocked to him in vast numbers, taking a great circuit by land before they could The holy Jesus, seeing their faith and zeal, reach him. though he came to this desert to avoid being thronged, would not conceal himself any longer from them; but being moved with compassion he came to them, and healed their sick. But considering afterwards that they were not within reach of any entertainment, there being no house or village near, lest the multitude should faint in their return to their houses, he resolved by a miraculous supply to make provision for them: and demanding what store of food they had, the disciples told him they had only five loaves and two fishes. Upon which commanding the company to sit down on the grass, he took the loaves and fishes, and looking up to heaven, blessed and brake them, giving them to the disciples to divide among the multitude. Here was a miracle beyond the expectation or desire of the people: they obtained their object in attending him, by having their sick healed; but when they saw that with five loaves of barley, and two small fishes, he had satisfied five thousand men, besides women and children, and that the fragments which remained filled twelve baskets, the miracle so happily met their wants, that they no longer doubted of his being the Messiah, who was to come into the world, and therefore they designed to take him back with them by force, and proclaim him king.\*

But Jesus presently sent his disciples before him to the wilderness by sea, which was on the same side with Bethsaida and Capernaum: for he that left his father's kingdom to take upon him the miseries and infelicities of this world, declined the tumultuary election of an earthly crown. Therefore, when he had sent away his disciples to Bethsaida by water, he went into the mountains to secrete himself till the multitude should separate to their several habitations; he, in the mean time, taking the opportunity of that retirement for a season of prayer.\* But when the apostles were engaged in the sea far from land, on a sudden a great and violent storm arose, with which they were pressed to the extremity of danger, labouring almost in hopelessness and despair till the fourth watch of the night; when in the midst of their fears and labours, Jesus comes walking on the sea, and appeared to them, which occasioned the utmost consternation. They had lost their pilot who used to conduct them safely through all difficulties of sea and land; and being now left to themselves, they had nothing but despair and death before their eyes; and seeing a shape of they knew not what walking on the water, they supposed it had been a spirit: but in tenderness to their frailty he soon dispelled their fears, by informing them who he was, which yet they desired to have confirmed to them by demonstration: for when Jesus bid them not to be afraid, telling them who he was, Simon Peter said unto him, "Master, if it be thou, command me to come to thee on the waters." The Lord did so; and Peter throwing himself upon the confidence of his master's power and providence, came out of the ship; but his fears beginning to weigh him down, he cried out, saying, "Lord save me!" Jesus taking him by the hand, reproved his timorousness, and the weakness of his faith, "Why didst thou doubt? Why was thy heart divided between faith and diffidence? Why didst thou distrust my power, who bid thee come to me?" When they were come into the ship, the rest of the disciples seeing Peter safe, and the storm appeased, came and adored Jesus, acknowledging

<sup>\*</sup> Prayer. See Matt. xiv. \$3.

his omnipotence, and admiring the divinity of his power and person. From hence they went over to the land of Genesareth, whither, when the inhabitants heard that he was come (for they knew him, as having been there before) they sent unto him all the diseased people in the place, with so firm a confidence believing his power, that they only desired a touch of his garment for the curing their most stubborn and inveterate maladies: and as many as touched his clothes were healed.

The day following, the people that stood on the other side of the sea considering that there was no other boat there, but that wherein the disciples had embarked, and that they had put off without Jesus, coming nigh the place where they had eaten bread, when by blessing the five loaves he so multiplied them, that they were sufficient to feed five thousand; and found that he was gone from thence as well as his disciples, they concluded that Jesus, though he went not with them, was gone after them to Capernaum, his usual habitation: and having opportunity of other vessels for passage, they took ship, and went to Capernaum to seek for him. Where when they found him, and not knowing which way he came thither, they in a surprise asked him how he came there. But Jesus, instead of gratifying their curiosity with a direct answer, takes occasion from this anxious inquiry of theirs to observe to them, "That which induces you to follow me is not the acknowledgment of my divine power evidenced by my miracles; nor is it to embrace my doctrine, nor a desire to learn of me, but a gross and carnal complacency of gratifying your appetites, and such advantages, as you obtained by my multiplying the loaves to feed you. Set not your hearts on these poor external advantages, desire not to acquire this corporal food in order to your worldly ends; but labour earnestly to obtain that food which is unperishable, and will make all that feed on it immortal." Hereupon they said to him, "What course wilt thou prescribe to us, that we may be always employed in the works of God, so as to be acceptable to him?" Jesus tells them, "That which God requires of them is to believe on him, the Messiah, whom God hath sent." Then

they, though they had before believed, and concluded that he must be the Messiah\* and were therefore resolved to make him their king, now retract their former resolution, and demanded farther demonstration; telling him they had great reason to adhere to Moses, who wrought such miracles, and brought down bread from heaven ready prepared; and unless he would produce some such testimony as might equal that of the Manna, they would not believe on him. Jesus replied, "That Manna came not from heaven, but out of the airy region; and it was the work of God, not of Moses: and now the same God gives you far more durable food than that was ;-he gives you his Son, who came really from heaven, and who is bread and food to your souls, as Manna was to your fathers: for that fed but the body, and presently perished; but that which God gives you now is for your souls, and feeds them to eternity. I am that durable life-giving bread of God, whose excellency is infinitely above that of Manna. You have seen me, and tasted of my miracles, yet ye do not believe in me, and consequently feed not on this true bread which came down from heaven. † This is an evidence of great obstinacy in you; for had God's preventing grace any influence on you, you would certainly come and obey my call, and I should not afterwards reject you, for this lies upon me, as the office for which my Father hath sent me, the fulfilling of which is my care, that I should preserve every one that shall thus come and believe on me, and give to every one that perseveres, besides many excellent privileges here, eternal life of body and soul hereafter. There is also another part of my Father's commission to me, that whosoever believeth in his Son should not perish, but inherit everlasting life in the other world." When the Jews heard him say he was the bread which came down from heaven; they, regarding his birth here on earth, and his parentage, could not forbear murmuring. To which Jesus replies, "I have said nothing to cause this murmur-

<sup>\*</sup> Messiah. See John v. 14, &c.

ing: \* it is true, there is some pretence for these vulgar prejudices against me; but it is an effect of my Father's preventing grace to fit and prepare men's hearts to be ready and willing to come to me: and for every one that doth thus come, and therein obey my call, on him will I certainly bestow everlasting life. The sum therefore of what I thus say hath been obscurely delivered to you of old by the prophets: for they, † speaking of these times foretold that God would dispose the hearts of men to receive Christ; and therefore it was that I said, that every disciple of my Father who hath been truly taught of him, doth certainly come to me, and believe in me. The Manna given in the desert did not make those immortal that did eat it: but the bread which is now sent you down from heaven, will give immortality to them that feed on it. And this bread of life is not only prepared for you Jews, but for all others who receive and digest it into the food and nourishment of their souls." Hercupon the Jews taking every thing he spake in at literal sense, disputed among themselves how he could give his flesh to eat, and his blood to drink. Jesus knowing their perplexity, tells them in the same metaphorical way, "Except you feed on this celestial food, that is, believe on me as a Saviour, you have no part of the true immortal life in you. For I that am sent in the flesh to die for the world, and am the food which will nourish you to everlasting life: so that he that believeth in me must necessarily derive life from me. The Manna which your fathers did eat could not preserve them for ever, for they are dead; but the bread that I shall give you shall beto you everlasting food." In this metaphorical way of speaking Jesus continued some time; upon which divers of his disciples of forsook him, being offended by their

<sup>\*</sup> Murmuring. See John vi. 44, &c.

<sup>+</sup> They. See John vi. 56, 57, &c.

<sup>‡</sup> A. See Isaiah liv. 13.

<sup>&</sup>amp; Disciples. John vi. 66. Among those disciples which St. John says deserted our Saviour upon the misunderstanding of this Sermon, St. Mark the Evangelist is by Epiphanius, Heræs. xv. said to be one, but that he was afterwards recalled by Simon Peter.

literal and carnal understanding of those words which he intended in a spiritual sense: for the words which he spake were not profitable in the sense of flesh and blood; but they are spirit, and they are life, himself being the expoun-

der, who best knew his own meaning.

Jesus seeing this great desertion of his disciples, began to suspect the rest, not excepting the twelve apostles; and therefore turning to them, he asked them, if they also would forsake him? To whom Simon Peter answered, "Lord, whither shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life: and we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." But although this public confession was made by St. Peter in the name and confidence of the other apostles, yet Jesus, who knew the hearts of them all, answered Peter, "Have not I of all the followers that have professed to believe in me, chosen but twelve to be my constant attendants, and one of them is a traitor?" meaning Judas Iscariot, who afterwards betrayed him. This he spake to them prophetically, that they might perceive that the events which afterward took place, particularly in the treachery of Judas, who conspired with the Jews to destroy him, did not surprize him that he could not prevent them, - but that they came by his own knowledge and permission: and though Judas as yet had made no offer or attempt that way, yet our Saviour knew he would deliver him to the Jews, notwithstanding he was so near him as to be one of the apostles, whom he intended should preach the gospel to all people.

## COMPLETE

## HISTORY

OF THE

## Holy Wible.

BOOK THE NINTH.

The third Year of Christ's public Ministry, beginning about the time of the third Passover after his Baptism.

OUR blessed Saviour thought proper to decline a journey to Jerusalem to observe the third passover after his baptism, but went about preaching among the cities of Galilee, where he rather chose to do it than in Judea, because the rulers of the Jews, especially those of the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, were lying in wait for some advantage or occasion to put him to death. The Pharisees, therefore, and some Scribes who came from Jerusalem, knowing this, quarrelled with him, about certain impertinent and unnecessary rites, derived to them not by divine sanction, but the mere ordinances of men, such as that of washing\* their hands often when they eat, and several other ceremonies, which the apostles of Jesus did not observe, but attended diligently to the simplicity and spiritual holiness of their master's doctrine. But in return to these and many other of their

<sup>\*</sup> Washing. This was a mere superstition among the Jews, and so strictly enjoined, that the transgressor was esteemed guilty of a capital crime: insomuch that some of their rabbies thought it worthy of death.

vain demands, Jesus gave them a sharp reproof for observing these and other traditions, to the neglect of divine precepts; and in particular the respect they taught men to give to the Corban,\* and refused to supply the necessity of others, thinking it to be religion, though they neglected piety and charity, and that to so great objects as even necessitous parents. Here was an example plain enough to demonstrate, that they who insisted so strictly upon the observation of traditions, made no scruple to annul the obligations of God's commands. Then charging them with downright hypocrisy, he reproaches them with what Isaiah prophesied of them; "Ye draw near me in outward professions of devotion, but your hearts are far from me. service which ye perform to me is vain, and likely to receive a slender reward, since my commands are not regarded by you, but instead thereof ye set up the constitutions of men." Then leaving the Pharisees with some displeasure, he calls the multitude, who, while he talked with the Pharisees, stood at some distance, and spoke more hopefully of, and cheerfully to them, saving, "As to this matter of washing before meat, so much insisted on by the Pharisees, do you consider what I now say, Not that which is eaten, but that which is spoken polluteth man." His disciples knowing the malice of the Pharisees, feared that by any farther reproaches he might aggravate and provoke them to do him some mischief, but he gives them no other reply than this: "All that come with such pre-

<sup>\*</sup> Corban. There was a solemn form of devoting among the Jews, though contrary to charity, yet very frequent among them, such as to bind a man's self by vow or execration, that he will in nothing be beneficial to his neighbour, his parent, &c, confirming by oath the cruelty of his disposition, says Philo. And this by them was called Corban, Mark vii. 11, and Matt. xv. 5, a gift. What is thus passed under their vow, is, say they, utterly forbidden or unlawful, which being consecrated must not be touched, or employed to any other use. So that the plain meaning of the place is, a father being in want complains to his son; the son answers that he hath vowed he will not, and therefore it is unlawful for him to relieve his father: and the Pharisees approved of this practice, that he may thus avoid his duty to his parents; and though quite contrary to the precept of honouring and relieving them, yet it was thought obligatory by them to the frustrating this commandment.

judices as the Pharisees do, and that prefer their own ordinances before the commands of God, it is to be expected, that telling them the truth will not please them. All seed, but that which is of my Father, and which is radicated in humility and piety, shall come to nothing; and consequently so must all faith in these conceited men; and therefore it is not strange if they be hurt at my words, and depart from them upon my reproving their errors. If this hath touched and discouraged them, let them go; they are stupidly and perversely ignorant themselves; they take pleasure in being called doctors and instructors of the ignorant: and what can be the effect of this, but that the leaders, and they that are led by them, shall together in-

gulph themselves in destruction?"

After this he thundered out woes and miseries against their impieties, for being curious of times, and punctual in rites and ceremonies, but at the same time most negligent and thoughtless of judgment, and the love of God; upbraids them for their pride and hypocrisy, for imposing heavy burdens upon others which themselves helped not to support; for taking away the key of knowledge from the people, obstructing the passage to heaven, and approving the acts of their fathers in persecuting the prophets. But for the question of washings, at the importunity of Peter he explains it to them, shewing that all pollution is from within, from the corruption of the heart, such as impure thoughts, unchaste desires, unholy purposes, immodest and indecent speech: these are the things that leave a lasting stain upon the soul, and defile it; but omitting to wash before meat, cannot be supposed to defile a man.

From hence Jesus departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house with design to conceal himself. But the fame of his miracles discovered him wheresoever he went; especially in cases of distress. The diligence of a mother's love and sorrow for her child in torment soon found him out in his retirement; for a Syrophænician woman, hearing of his miraculous power which he exercised over devils and unclean spirits, and recognizing his dignity, thus addresses herself to him, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." Jesus, at first,

received her with apparent coldness and indifference; but his disciples, to be rid of her importunity, desired him to grant her request and dismiss her. Jesus tells them he was sent only to the Jews, to bring them to repentance, and to shew his miracles among them. The poor woman impatient of delay, continues her importunate addresses to him, and prostrating herself at his feet, implores his help on her child. Jesus told her, "It was not meet\* to work those miracles on an heathen, which were destined to God's people the Jews. The afflicted mother finding his discourse tend only to discomfort and reject her for her nation's sake, renews her petition: humbly acknowledging the truth of what he urged, but in all submission hoping a poor distressed heathen might be admitted to partake of the mercies promised to the Jews. She desired but one instance of favour on her daughter, which he poured forth without measure upon the sons and daughters of Jesus being pleased with her zeal and discretion, and pitying her daughter's infelicity, dismisses her with this applause of her faith, and comfort to her child, "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee as thou desirest!" and her daughter was made whole in that instant of time. The joyful mother retires with infinite pleasure and satisfaction, and finds her daughter perfectly cured.

Jesus, after the performance of this miracle, continued not long there, but returning to the coast of Galilee through the midst of Decapolis, they present unto him an unhappy youth, deprived of the benefit of speech and hearing. Our Saviour surveying this object with pity, takes him aside† from the gazing crowd, and, in a more

<sup>\*</sup> Meet. Compare this explication with the text of St. Matt. xv. 26, 27. Our blessed Lord came to establish a kingdom of holiness and peace in the hearts and lives of all his followers, but the Jews had long before rendered many of the precepts of the law of no effect, and explained away the rest into a childish system of rites and ceremonies, and have so continued to act down to the present day.

<sup>†</sup> Aside. The fathers differ very much in their opinion about the reason of Christ's taking the young man aside; for since he designed to work a miracle on him, it might be thought expedient to do it in public. But after various con-

than usually solemn posture of devotion, fixing his eyes on heaven, where the Father of light dwelleth, pronounced the young man cured. The string which so long had held his tongue was broken, and the organs of his ears were sensible of every joyful sound upon them. Our Saviour returning him to his glad friends, enjoins them silence; but they cannot contain their joy; and joining both with Jews and Gentiles in admiration of such wonderful acts, acknowledge that none but the God of Israel

could do such things.

These miraculous acts of his echoed through all places wherever he passed, attracting multitudes of diseased people, who apply to him for relief; which none fail to receive, for he healed them all. The people could not forbear following him; each day and hour furnishing them with something rare and strange, insomuch that they followed him three days successively, and at last had nothing of sustenance to support them till they could return to their own homes. Jesus seeing such crowds of people fainting about hira, in pity to their necessities resolved to feed them once more by a stupendous miracle. In order thereunto he first tried the apostles' faith, by commanding them to provide for his poor and hungry guests. answered in surprise, "Whence should we find provision for such a multitude in so barren and inhospitable a place?" However he demanded an account of their scanty store, which they producing, amounted to no more than seven loaves and a few small fishes. With this poor pittance of food he begins the banquet, ordering the multitude to seat themselves on the grassy plain, while he multiplied this small store of bread and fish to a quantity amply sufficient to supply all their wants. Then taking the loaves into his

jectures, the context in St. Mark vii. 36, seems most clearly to explain this text in the 33d verse, of "taking him aside." For in ver. 36, our Saviour commands that this miracle be kept secret; for which reason he may be supposed to do it in secret. As to the performance of this and many other miracles in secret, the general opinion is, that our Saviour in the main did it to denote his humility; that he performed not many miracles in public for ostentation sake, but for the necessity of convincing the Jews, as well as healing their infirmities.

sacred hands, he blessed them, and giving to his disciples, bid them distribute to the people of them and the fish, which they did, whilst the astonished crowd knew not which most to admire, the gratifying their hungry appetites, or what so astonished their senses. But the whole life of the blessed Jesus was a continued series of wonders, each miraculous hour being succeeded by another: for no sooner had he fed and satisfied this multitude, that consisted of above four thousand, but the seven loaves and small fishes, which one small basket could perhaps contain, did at the end of the feast when all the guests were satisfied, produce seven baskets full of fragments.

From hence Jesus departed by ship to the coasts of Mageddon and Dalmanutha, whither the Pharisees and Sadducees came, seeking a sign of him. But Jesus rejected their captious and impertinent demand, knowing they did it to an ill purpose, and with disaffection; reproving them in that they discerned the face of the sky, and the prognostics of fair or foul weather, but not the signs of the time of the Son of man. However, since they had neglected so great demonstrations of miracles, gracious discourses, holy laws and prophecies, they must expect no other sign but the sign of the prophet Jonas.\* And thus

he dismissed these impertinent inquisitors.

Jesus again taking ship, passed over the lake, and by the way, as his disciples were solicitous because they had forgotten to take bread, he gave them a caution to beware of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the leaven of Herod; meaning the hypocrisy and vanities of the one, and the heresy of the other. For Herod's leaven was an absurd notion that he was the Messiah, which the sect of the Herodians earnestly and maliciously promoted. But the disciples understanding their Lord in a literal sense, about taking care to bring bread with them, he reproached them with ingratitude and forgetfulness, in their distrust of God's providence, and his care of them. "Why should you think, said he, that my speech should relate to your

<sup>\*</sup> Jonas. Meaning the resurrection of his body after three days' burial: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so must the Son of man be three days and three nights in the bowels of the earth.

neglect of bringing bread with you? as if I were not able to supply that want. Will you never understand nor consider what has been before your eyes? Do you not remember the two miraculous feasts? the one of feeding five thousand with five loaves, the other of four thousand with seven loaves? How stupidly inconsiderate are you to forget these things?" After this manner, entertaining themselves by the way, they came together to Bethsaida, where Jesus cured a blind man; for spitting on his eyes and putting his hands upon him, it was to the poor dark wretch a salutary balsam, when his divine benediction had once consecrated it.

Our blessed Lord soon departed thence into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, out of Herod's power, (for it was in Philip's jurisdiction) and after he had prayed with his disciples, he inquired what opinion the world entertained of him; and whom \* they thought him to be. They answered, Some say thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, others Jeremias, or one of the prophets." But Jesus asked the apostles their own opinion; when Peter, in the name of all† the rest, made an open and confident confession, "Thou art the CHRIST, the Son of the living God." This confession Jesus not only confirmed as true, but as revealed by God; "This faith of thine, saith Jesus to Peter, is not built

<sup>\*</sup> Whom. In Galilee especially the sect of the Pharisees was mightily divided, whose opinion was, That the souls of dead men according to their several merits did transmigrate into other bodies of very perfect and excellent persons. And therefore in all this variety none hit upon the right, or fancied him to be a distinct person from the ancients: but although they differed in the assignation of his name, yet generally they agreed it was the soul of a departed prophet, which had passed into another body.

<sup>†</sup> All. When our blessed Lord put the question to his disciples, Matt. xv. 16, concerning himself, who he was, he did not apply himself in particular to Peter, for he there says, "But whom say ye that I am?" Upon which Peter, as the eldest apostle, answers in the name of the rest, "Thou art Christ, &c." and consequently the reply of our Saviour, and the blessing subsequent thereupon, was not only applicable or pronounced singly to Peter, but to the rest of the twelve; and the power of binding and loosing was not only given by him to Peter, as the Romanists fondly presume, but also to all the rest. This is plain from Matt. xviii. 18, where our Saviour in general says, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, &c." Not whatsoever thou shalt bind, &c.

upon human testimony, but upon the miracles and doctrines which thou hast seen and heard, which are the testimonies of God himself, whereby he hath revealed me to thee." And immediately after the blessing of Peter's person, with an allusion to his name, which signifies a "stone," Jesus said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock (the article of Peter's confession) I will build my church;" promising assistances even to all ages, insomuch that the gates of hell, that is, persecution, death, and the grave, should never prevail against it; adding withal, a promise to Peter, in behalf of all the rest, as he made confession for and in the name of them all, that he would give to him the keys\* of the kingdom of heaven, so that whatsoever he should bind on earth should be bound in heaven.

The disciples, thus knowing and acknowledging him to be the Messiah, and himself having confirmed it so to them, he commanded them not to publish it till after his resurrection, at which time in his wisdom he thought it most seasonable. And now the days from hence forward to the death of Jesus, we must reckon to be like vigils or eves of his passion: for now he began and often did repeat those predictions of the barbarous usage he should shortly receive from the Jewish Sanhedrim; that he should be rejected of the elders and chief Priests and Scribes, and suffer many things at Jerusalem, and be killed and raised up the third day. Peter, hearing this discourse, so contrary to his hopes, which built too much upon temporal expectances, (for he had hitherto only learnt the doctrine of Christ's coming, but not the mystery of the cross) in great but mistaken zeal, took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not befal thee." But Jesus not approving of such an admonition, that savoured not of God, but the world, reproved Peter severely; saying, "Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an offence to me; a

<sup>\*</sup> Keys. The doctrine and discipline of the Christian church may be intended by these keys, as these express the mind of Christ concerning the state of men's souls.

<sup>†</sup> Satan. The word Satan here signifies according to the use of the Hebrew phrase, 2 Sam. xix. 22, where David rejecting the counsel of Abishai, saith,

snare, moving me to that which were a sin, if I should yield to it, and contrary to the will and command of God my Father." And calling his disciples to him, he told them the second part of a sad doctrine, which not only himself but they also must suffer. For when he the head was to be crowned with thorns, it would be a great indecency for them the members to be indulged in softness. And therefore to prepare them for what would hereafter happen to him and them, he tells them; that whoever will be his disciple, must deny himself, take up his cross, forego his appetites, and trace his master's footsteps, marked out with his blood that he shed for their redemption. And to let them farther see that there was no escaping from the participation of Christ's sufferings, he adds this, "He that will save his life shall lose it, and he that will lose it shall save it to eternity." Which part soever we choose, there is a life to be lost: but as the first are foolish to the extremest misery, that will lose their souls to gain the world, so they are most wise and fortunate, that will give their lives for him, because, when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and in the glory of his Father, and of his angels, he shall reward every man according to his works. This discourse Jesus concluded with a prophecy, that some\* standing there should not die till they saw the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

About six days, if we reckon exclusively, and about eight days, if we reckon inclusively, after our Lord had

<sup>&</sup>quot;Why art thou to me this day, in Satanam, for an adversary?" That is, Why dost thou give me this evil and pernicious counsel, and so suppliest the real enemy's, or even the devil's place to me?

<sup>\*</sup> Some. This was meant of St. John, that he should not die, till that remarkable coming of Christ in judgment upon his crucifiers, the visible destruction of the Jewish state. And that we find was fulfilled in St. John's seeing the destruction of the Jews, which was to fall out in that generation, Matt. xxiv. that is, in the life-time of some there present, and is called the "Kingdom of God, and the coming of Christ," and by consequence here most probably the "Son of man's coming in his kingdom," that is, his coming in the exercise of his kingly office, to take vengeance on his enemies, and to discriminate the faithful believers from them; which was as literally fulfilled as it had been positively foretold.

accepted the title of Messiah, happening to be with his disciples and the multitude in the county of Cæsarea Philippi, he left them in the plain, and went up into an exceeding high mountain, with Peter the most zealous, James the most active, and John the most beloved disciple.\* In this solitude, while Jesus was praying with the three, he was transfigured, Luke ix. 28. "And it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, he took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray; and as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering. Matthew says, xvii. 2, "he was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. In the transfiguration, the face of Jesus became radiant and dazzling, for it shone like the sun in its unclouded meridian brightness, and so was incomparably more glorious than the face of Moses at the giving of the law. At the same time his garments acquired a snowy whiteness, far beyond any thing that human art could produce, a whiteness, bright as light, and sweetly refulgent, but in a degree inferior to the radiancy of his countenance. Thus for a little while, during his state of humiliation, the Son of God permitted the glory of his divinity to break forth, as it were, and shine through the veil of his human nature with which it was covered.—Moreover to heighten the grandeur and solemnity of the scene, Moses, the great lawgiver of the Jews, and Elijah, who had been a most zealous defender of the law, appeared in the beauties of immortality, wherewith the blest above are adorned. "And behold there talked with Jesus two men, which were Who appeared in glory, and spake of Moses and Elias. his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter, and they that were with him, were heavy with

<sup>\*</sup> Disciple. M'Knight's Harmony.

<sup>†</sup> Transfigured. The Greek word used in Matthew, implies either that there was a transformation made in the substance of his body, according to the import of the word in Ovid, and other writers. See Philip. iii. 21. Or that the outward appearance only of his body was altered, as seems most probable, from the manner in which Luke has expressed it.

sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him," Luke ix. 30, 31, 32. It seems the three disciples were so unfortunate as not to see the transfiguration begin: for happening to fall asleep at the time of prayer, they lost that pleasure, together with a great part of the conversation which the wisest lawgiver, and most zealous prophet that ever lived, had with the only begotten Son of God, during his residence on earth. In general, however, they heard as much as made them understand, that the subject they talked of was his meritorious sufferings and death, by which he was to redeem the world, a subject that had given great offence to the disciples, and above all to Peter, a few days Probably the streams of light which issued before this. from Christ's body, especially his countenance, and the voices of Moses and Elias talking with him, made such an impression on the senses of the disciples, though buried in sleep, that they awaked. Lifting up their eyes therefore, the three must have been amazed beyond measure, when they beheld their master in the majesty of his transfigured state, and his illustrious attendants, whom they might know to be Moses and Elias, by revelation, or by what they said, or by the appellations which Jesus gave them in speaking to them. Peter particularly, being both afraid and glad at the glorious sight, was in the utmost confusion. Nevertheless, the forwardness of his disposition prompting him to say something, he spoke, not knowing well what he said. "And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here, and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. For he wist not what to say, for they were sore afraid, Mark ix. 5, 6. The apostles, both before and after the transfiguration, were with their master in many delightful spots of the country, heard many ravishing sermons, and saw many wonderful miracles; but in no place, and on no occasion but this, were they ever heard to say, "It is good for us to be here." Peter fancied, no doubt, that Jesus had now assumed his proper dignity, that Elias was come according to Malachi's prediction, and that the kingdom was at length begun. Wherefore he proposed to provide some accommodation

for Jesus and his august assistants, intending perhaps to bring the rest of the disciples, with the multitude from the plain below, to behold his matchless glory. He thought this was better for his master than to be killed at Jerusalem, concerning which, Jesus had been talking with the messengers from heaven, and the design of which, Peter could not comprehend. "While he yet spake, behold a bright cloud\* overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him," Matt. xvii. 5. The voice uttering these words, just as Moses and Elias disappeared, intimated, that men were no longer to hearken unto them speaking in the law, but for the future were to obey Jesus; because Moses and Elias, though both eminent in their stations, were only servants, whereas this was God's beloved Son. Besides, the thing uttered by the voice, "Hear ye him," plainly alluding to Deut. xviii. 15, signified, that Jesus was the prophet of whom Moses spake in that passage: " The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee,

<sup>\*</sup> Cloud. This cloud which overshadowed Moses and Elias, is called by the apostle Peter, who beheld it, "the excellent glory." 2 Pet. i. 17. Wherefore it must have been the schechinah, or visible symbol of the divine presence, as is evident likewise from the words that came out of the cloud, which were the words of God himself. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him."

The transfiguration was intended for several important purposes. About six days before it happened, Jesus had predicted his own sufferings and death. At the same time, to prevent his disciples from being dejected by the melancholy prospect, as well as from falling into despair when the dismal scene should open, he told them, that though in appearance he was nothing but a man, and affliction was generally to be the lot of his disciples, he would come hereafter in great glory as universal Judge, and render unto every man according to his deeds. Matt. xvi. 27, 28. And for proof of this, he declared that some of themselves should not taste of death till they saw him coming in his kingdom, saw a lively representation of the glory which he spake of, and were witnesses to an exercise of his power, as Judge; he meant on his enemies the unbelieving Jews, who were to be punished by him with the most terrible destruction that ever befel any nation. See M·Knight's Harmony.

of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him ye shall hearken," Deut. xviii. 15. When the three disciples heard the voice coming from the cloud, loud as thunder (see John xii. 29,) and full of divine majesty, such as mortal ears were unaccustomed to hear, they fell flat to the ground on their faces, being in a great panic; an effect which visions of this kind commonly produced on the prophets and other holy men to whom they were given. Gen. xv. 12. Isa. vi. 5. Ezek. ii. 1. Dan. x. 8. Rev. i. 17. It seems, human nature could not well support such manifestations of the divine presence. In this condition the disciples continued till Jesus approached, and raising them up, dispelled their fears. "And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man

save Jesus only," Matt. xvii. 6, 7, 8.

Jesus and the disciples having been in the mountain all night, (See Luke ix. 37.) the transfiguration may be supposed to have happened either in the day-time, or in the night. That it happened in the night-time is probable from the disciples falling asleep while Jesus prayed, a circumstance which could not happen by day to all the three at once, and in the open air. Next morning, as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus charged the apostles to conceal what they had seen, till he should arise from the dead. " And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man until the Son of man be risen again from the dead," Matt. xvii. 9. He knew that the world, and even his own disciples, were not yet capable of comprehending the design of his transfiguration, and that if it had been published before his resurrection, it might have appeared incredible, because hitherto nothing but afflictions and persecutions had attended him. The disciples had never heard from the doctors that the Messiah was to die, far less that he was to be raised from the dead. On the contrary, they thought he was to abide for ever, (John xii. 34,) and that there was to be no end of his kingdom. Wherefore they were utterly at a loss to understand what their master meant, when he spoke of his rising again from the dead; and

being afraid to ask a particular explication of the matter, they disputed much among themselves about it to no purpose. "And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning or debating one with another, what the rising from the dead should mean," Mark ix. 10. Being also much surprised at the sudden departure of Elias, they turned to Jesus, and proposed this doubt: Since Elias has gone away so soon, how came the Scribes to affirm that he must appear before the Messiah erects his empire? "And they asked him saying, Why say the Scribes that Elias must first come?" Mark xi. supposing, that Elias was to have an active hand in modelling and settling the kingdom, they never doubted that he would have continued a while on earth. "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things," Matt. xvii. 11. Jesus not only acknowledged the necessity of Elijah's coming before the Messiah, according to Malachi's prediction, but he assured his disciples that he was already come, and described the treatment he had met with from the nation, in such a manner as to make them understand that he spake of John Baptist. At the same time he told them, that though the Baptist's ministry was excellently calculated for producing all the effects ascribed to it by the prophets, they needed not be surprised to find that it had not been crowned with all the success which might have been expected, and that the Baptist had met with much opposition and persecution. For, said he, both the person, and the preaching of the Messiah himself, shall meet with the same treatment. I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed, likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist," Matt. xvii. 12, 13.

After these things, Jesus came to Capernaum, the place of his ordinary residence. But he was no sooner arrived, than the receivers of the tax called Didrachma, a sum equal to half a shekel, or fifteen pence of our money, came to Peter, and asked him, whether his master would pay that tribute. They demanded the tribute for Jesus from Peter, either because the house in which Je-

sus lived was his, or because they observed him to be of a more forward disposition than the rest. Peter told the collectors that his master would pay the tribute; and consequently made a sort of promise to procure it for them. Yet when he considered the matter more maturely, he was afraid to speak to the Messiah concerning his paying taxes on any pretence whatsoever. In the mean time, Jesus knowing both what had happened, and what Peter was thinking, prevented him, saying, "What thinkest thou Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute: of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, then are the children free;" Matt. xvii. 25, 26, insinuating that, because he was himself the Son of the great King, to whom heaven, earth, and sea, with all things in them belong, he was not obliged to pay tribute, as holding any thing by a derived right from any king whatever. Or if, as is more probable, the contribution was made for the service and reparation of the temple, his meaning was, that being the Son of him to whom the tribute was paid, he could justly have excused himself. Nevertheless, that he might not give offence, he sent Peter to the lake, with a line and a hook, telling him, that in the mouth of the first fish that came up, he should find a piece of money equal in value to the sum required for them two.

On a former occasion, Simon Peter had gotten his particular dignity secured to him; Jesus having promised him the keys of the kingdom, by which without doubt they all understood the place of high steward. Probably therefore he was not engaged in this debate. But James and John, the sons of Zebedee, might be principally concerned in it, contending with our Lord's blood relations, James the less, and Judas sirnamed Thaddeus, and Simon Zelotes, who doubtless thought their consanguinity to Christ, entitled them to the most honourable and profitable offices in his kingdom, next to Peter. Whereas the sons of Zebedee claimed them, on account of their intimacy with Jesus, and the qualifications for which they were named "Sons of thunder." Accordingly we find the two brothers afterwards asking the favour of the

chief posts from Christ himself. This discourse therefore concerning humility, would be considered by Zebedee's sons as particularly designed for them, which probably was the reason that John, desiring to divert it, told his master, they had seen one casting out devils in his name, and had forbidden him, because he did not follow with them. " And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils \* in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us," Luke ix. 49. "But Jesus said, Forbid him not, for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me," Mark ix. 39. Be the person who he will, he must have an high notion of my power, since he sees the devils go out at mentioning my name. Besides, "He that is not against us is on our part:" Mark ix. 40, you should consider, that in the present circumstances, every one who does not oppose and persecute us, is a friend; and that the ejection of demons in my name, will advance my reputation and promote my interest, although those who east them out should have no intention to do either, nay though the devils which are cast out should intend the contrary. Farther, to shew the apostles that they had been in the wrong to forbid this person, who must have entertained a great veneration

<sup>\*</sup> Devils. The doctors Whitby and Clarke are of opinion, that this was one of the Baptist's disciples, who, though he did not follow Christ with the rest, had been taught by his master to acknowledge him as the Messiah, and entertained so great a veneration for him, that he attempted to cast out devils in his name. Or if the character given of this person, " He followeth not with us," and the apostles prohibited, " We forbade him," are thought inconsistent with the opinion of the doctors mentioned, we may suppose that he was an exorcist like the seven sons of Sceva, (Acts xix. 13.) who having seen the miracles which the apostles had performed in their master's name while out on their first mission, thought there might be some great occult virtue in it, and somade use of it in his exorcisms as Sceva's sons did in theirs, but with better success; God permitting him to cast out devils in Christ's name, to clothe his Son with the greater honour. Or the devils may have obeyed the commands of persons, who without Christ's commission made use of his name, out of malice to him, and in hopes of bringing reproach on him through their misconduct. Nor is Christ's answer to John, ver. 39, inconsistent with these suppositions.

for their master, and was in a fair way to become his follower, he told them that the lowest degree of respect which any one shewed him, though it were but the giving a cup of cold water to his thirsty disciple, is acceptable to him, and shall not lose his reward. "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward," Mark ix. 41. Whereas, on the other hand, the least discouragement of his servants in their duty, come from what quarter it will, shall be severely punished. "And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones, that believe in me, or tempt them to sin, it is better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea," Mark ix. 42.\* Hence he inferred, that it is better to deny one's self the greatest earthly satisfactions, and to part with every thing most precious, represented by the figures of an hand, a foot, or an eye, than by these things to cause the weakest of his friends to stumble, as some of the disciples had lately done. The amputation of our hands and feet, and the plucking out of our eyes when they cause us to offend, import also that we should deny ourselves such use of our senses and members as may lead us into sin.

About this time the feast of tabernacles drawing near, the blessed Jesus was very much importuned by his kindred to go to Judea to the feast, that the multitudes which followed him might again see the miracles which he did; for they thought he acquired no fame by performing his miracles privately. But these things were urged by them through want of faith. However, Jesus, to set them right, tells them, that it was not yet proper for him to be so public, because the doctrine that he taught was odious to the world; for at that time the Jews sought to kill him. He

<sup>\*</sup> He threatens those that offend his little ones, that whosoever shall grieve any true Christians, though they be of the weakest, shall oppose their entrance into the ways of God, or discourage and obstruct their progress in those ways, shall either restrain them from doing good, or draw them in to commit sin, his punishment will be very great, and the death and ruin of his soul more terrible than such a death and ruin of his body would be. See Matt. xviii. 6. Matthew Henry.

told them, they might appear where they would, being not exposed to such hatred \* as he was from the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Upon this conference, his disciples went up to the feast, to which Jesus designing to go in private, as he passed through Samaria, he found the inhabitants of a little village so inhospitable, † as to refuse to give him entertainment; which so provoked the intemperate zeal of James and John, that they fain would have called for fire to consume them, even as Elias did. But Jesus, with a sweetness natural to him, mildly restrained their revengeful heat, telling them they were quite mistaken in the economy and conduct of the christian spirit, which he had prescribed, and which differed much from that of a prophet in the Old Testament, moved by zeal against the enemies of God: "The course," said he, "which in such cases you must take is that of meekness and persuasion, and not rashly and indiscreetly upon every little umbrage, or displeasure, invoke the vengeance of heaven to destroy a man, whose redemption was to cost the effusion of their Saviour's blood. I came not to kill any, but to preserve and rescue from death, and from all that is evil." All the revenge that Jesus took, was quietly to leave the

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<sup>\*</sup> Hatred. The text here implied in John vii, 7, is translated thus; "The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth." This translation is literal indeed; but all or most interpreters fail not to observe, that this expression does not always denote an absolute impossibility to do any thing, but only a design or will not to do it, upon the account of some difficulty or uneasiness it may be attended with; and this they prove from several unquestionable examples. It is said, "That God could not do any thing to Sodom till Lot had left it," Gen. xix. 22. "That Joseph's brethren could not speak peaceably unto him, Gen. xxxvii. 4. "That the unkind friend could not rise to lend his friend three loaves;" Luke xi. 7, with several others. But it is certain, that God, if he had pleased, could have destroyed Sodom independently of Lot; that Joseph's brethren could have spoken peaceably to him, &c. Therefore all this impotency, implied in the word "cannot," is to be attributed to the want of will: and since people are so ready to take these places literally, it is proper they should be rendered, "They would not," and not, "They cannot."

<sup>+</sup> Inhospitable. See Luke ix. 51, and avii. 11.

place: but to demonstrate more plainly to those disciples. whose mistaken conduct he had blamed, how they ought to behave themselves upon such occasions, by a miracle he shews them that they must recompense evil with good. And immediately ten leprous persons, who came out of the neighbourhood where he had been so inhospitably treated, presented themselves with loud exclamations for help, "Jesus! master! have mercy upon us." His compassion was as ready to relieve, as their necessity to ask; for at sight he pronounced the method of their cure: "Go shew yourselves to the priest, as the law requires, and before you come thither, you shall be healed:" which accordingly took place; for as they were on their way, they were all cured. But see the innate ingratitude of human nature! Of the ten which received this miraculous blessing, but one poor wretch returned to give thanks, and he a stranger; who, before he was cured, by reason of the uncleanness of his disease, was forced to stand afar off, now joyfully approaches his divine physician, with a loud voice glorifying God, and throwing himself at his feet, gives thanks to the holy Jesus.

The blessed Saviour, being now arrived at Jerusalem, for some days did not appear in the public meetings, though at the same time he heard of the various opinions of men concerning him; some saying that he was a good man; others that he deceived the people; while the Pharisees sought for him to do him a mischief. But when they despaired of finding him in the midst of the feast among the people, they repaired to the temple, where they found him preaching openly, to the great surprise and amazement of those that knew his parentage and education; for they marvelled, saying, "How comes he to understand the law and scriptures so well, having not been educated in the schools of the prophets?" But notwithstanding Jesus had convinced them by the variety and divinity of his miracles and discourses; yet so perverse and obstinate were they, that they gave the greatest testimony in the world of human weakness, and how prevalent prejudice is above the convictions of demonstration: for a proverb, a mistake, a mere error in matter of circum-

stance, did in their understandings outweigh multitudes of miracles and arguments of which they had been witnesses, and which before had convinced them; for Christ being of Galilee, because of the proverb, "That out of Galilee comes no prophet," and because the rulers did not believe in him, these outweighed the demonstrations of his mercy, power, and divinity. But notwithstanding these opinions of some, yet very many believed on him, and no man durst lay hands on him to take him, for as yet his time was not come, in which he meant to give himself up to the power of the Jews: and therefore when the Pharisees sent officers to seize him, they also became his disciples, being surprised at the excellency of his doctrine. And not only the inferior officers, but the rulers were suspected; for Nicodemus, the same that by stealth and in the night came before to Jesus, seeing with what prejudice the Pharisees persecuted him, could not forbear interposing, urging the unreasonableness of condemning any person without a hearing. Upon which they reproached him for taking a Galilean's part. "Art thou, one of the Sanhedrim, a follower of the Galilean? Examine all times, you shall never find that Galilee hath produced a prophet."

In the evening Jesus went to the mount of Olives, on the east of Jerusalem, and the next day returned again into the temple; where the Scribes and Pharisees brought him a woman, taken in the act of adultery, tempting him to give sentence, that they might accuse him of severity and intermeddling if he condemned her, or of remissness and love of popularity if he acquitted her. But Jesus answered them by bidding the innocent person among them cast the first stone at the adulteress; and then stooping down to give them a fair occasion to withdraw, he wrote upon the ground with his finger, whilst they left the woman and her crime to a more private censure. None remaining now but Jesus and the woman, she standing before him in the posture of an accused criminal before a judge; he lifting up himself, and finding none but the woman, asked her what was become of her accusers; or whether any one had condemned her. She answered, " No man, Lord. Neither do I," said he, "but call thee to repentance and reformation: and then charging her to sin no

more,\* he dismissed her.

Shortly after, Jesus began again to discourse to the Jews of his mission† from God, telling them that he was the light of the world, and that whoever would follow him, should receive that illumination which would infallibly guide him to eternal life. The Jews refuse to believe him, because of his own single testimony of himself: to which he replied, "You that know not my divine extraction, judge of me only according to my human original, and in proportion to that give your opinion of me; but yet if I should do so, my judgment would be valid according to law, because this is the judgment and testimony of my Father, who by his Spirit and miracles, and his voice from heaven requiring all to believe on me, must needs judge them as obstinate unbelievers, who shall stand out against all this. It is the known custom of all laws, particularly of yours, (Deut. xvii. 6) that is e testimony of two men is to be received in any cause whatever: and I and my Father are those two; for as I now witness of myself in a cause that concerns you; so my Father also, by a voice from heaven, by descent of the Spirit, by miracles and prophecies, testifies my commission from him." But the Jews regarding only his human extraction, Jesus replied, "You will not receive any knowledge concerning me or my Father: your acknowledgment of me is the only way to bring you to the knowledge of my Father. I shall depart from you, and then ye will seek me unprofitably; and by not believing me now, bring judgments upon yourselves hereafter. After the Romans, at your solicitation, shall crucify t me, there will be such evidences of my being truly what ye will not now be-

<sup>\*</sup> Sin no more. Several critics observe that the word amaglaren to sin, is used by the most elegant Greek classics (as the correspondent word peccare is by the Latin) to signify the commission of adultery; which strongly intimates, that even the light of nature taught many of the heathen the exceeding sinfulness of it. See Doddridge on John viii. 1, &c.

<sup>+</sup> Mission. See John viii. 12, 13, 15, &c-

d Crucify. See John viii. 28.

lieve me to be, that you shall have no excuse to deny it; then shall you be convinced, either to the working of your repentance or destruction, that I am the Messiah, and came from God, and do nothing but according to my commission from him." Upon this many of the Jews believed; \* to whom addressing himself, he said, "If ye constantly practise my commands, ye are truly and really my disciples; and those truths which I shall reveal to you shall procure you a most valuable freedom." The other Jews then present, who were not believers, taking this as a reflection on them said, "We are heirs. of the promises made to Abraham, † and were never yet slaves to any man; how then do we need freedom?". Jesus answered them, "I do assuret you, you are mistaken in thinking vourselves to be free, for there are no such slaves as those that live indulging in sin; and being such, you are far from having any right to be continued. in God's family, which belongs only to sons. § In the common account of the world, a servant is so far from being a son, or having any right to the inheritance of the family, that he is at the mercy of the heir when he comes to age, to cast him quite out of the family; and unless the son make him free, he cannot be free. And this is. the case of all such as you. Christ must free him from his spiritual bondage of sin, before he can be capable of any benefit of being a son, even of a son by adoption." The Jews then valuing themselves upon their being the children of Abraham and of God, he tells them, as to the first, that if they were indeed Abraham's children, they would be like him in his faith and obedience, as children, resemble their parents in their nature and form: and as to their being the children of God, he tells them, that their hatred to him is a certain proof that God is not their Father, "For, says he, I am sent immediately from God, I came from heaven, and what I do is by commission

<sup>\*</sup> Believed. See John viii. 30.

<sup>†</sup> Abraham. See John viii. 33.

<sup>‡</sup> Assure. See John viii. 34.

Sons. See John viii. 15, and so on to the end of this sermon.

from God. Ye imitate the devil, who from the beginning was malicious, proud, and bloody, and soon apostatized from God and the right way; for he is an enemy to truth, and therefore for him to lie, and confirm you in unbelief is natural to him. I am sure you have no fault or imposture to lay to my charge, and vet ye will not believe the truth when I speak it. If ye had true piety in you, then certainly my doctrine, being from God, would be acceptable to you, and ye would embrace it." To this the Jews could make no reply, but fell into reproachful language, calling him Samaritan\* and madman; † and misunderstanding on what grounds he gave himself the preference before Abraham, and thinking that he had spoken blasphemy, they resolved to confute him to some purpose, for they took up stones to cast at him: but he went out of the temple, and miraculously preserved himself, passing safely through the midst of them.

But in his passage he met a man who had been born blind; and being asked by some of his followers whether it was the man's own sin, or some sin of his parents, that caused this blindness, he told them, that this misfortune was not sent as a punishment of his own or his parents' sin, but as an occasion to make public the glory of God: and Jesus, to demonstrate that himself was the light of the world in all senses, said it now, and proved it by a miracle; for sitting down, he made clay of his spittle,

<sup>\*</sup> Samaritan. This title of Samaritan is here given to Christ by way of reproach: Not that they thought him so, but because this was an odious name among the Jews: or else, because he conversed with the Samaritan woman, which was against the Jewish rule, John iv. 9, he is thought a deserter of the Jewish law, and so to be one of them.

<sup>†</sup> Madman. This is rendered, "thou hast a devil." All sorts of diseases were sometimes brought on men by the devil, and so generally they that were brought to Christ for cure, are said to be possessed; but especially those who were more strangely affected without any visible cause of it, were generally thought to suffer this from the devil's obtaining power to possess them; and of this sort, especially mad-men, who being not discernibly sick, did yet behave themselves as if they were under some strong distemper, and therefore by them supposed to be possessed by some evil spirit. So in Justin Martyr, Apol. 2. "They that are possessed are by all men called mad."

and anointing the eyes of the blind man, bid him go and wash in Siloam.\* The blind man joyfully obcyed, and went and washed as he was commanded, and returned seeing; which so amazed his neighbours, that they questioned whether this was the same man that used to beg. He told them positively he was the same man, and gratified their curiosity by informing them who was his physician, and the method of his cure. This miracle being performed on the sabbath-day, the Pharisees laid hold on the circumstance to lessen Jesus, saying, "This man cannot be of God, because he violateth the sabbath." But others with less prejudice said, "Certainly such miracles cannot be wrought but by the finger of God, and therefore cannot be the work of an impostor, or a man of sin. The incredulous Jews would not believe matter of fact in the man that was blind; and thinking to make the thing appear intricate, and beyond the capacity of the vulgar, who they feared might by these miracles be induced to believe on Jesus; sent for the parents of the man who was restored to his sight, of whom they asked these three questions, Whether he was their son? whether he was born blind? And whether they knew how, or by whom he was cured? To the two first questions they answered directly, "We know him to be our son, and that he was born blind; but how, or by whom he recovered his sight he himself best knows; he is of age, let him answer for himself." The poor parents durst say no more; for they had been before cautioned by an agreement among the Jews, which was, that if any man did confess Christ, he should be excluded from the synagogue; and therefore they referred them for a further answer to their son. Him therefore they a second time examined, attempting to draw him from that opinion of Christ which he seemed to entertain, by bidding him ascribe the praise of his cure wholly to God, and not to look on Jesus with any veneration; telling him, that if he did it on the day, and in

<sup>\*</sup> Sileam. There is a tradition, that this was a pool of limpid water, which God sent at the prayer of Isaiah the prophet a little before his death, to satisfy the necessities of his people oppressed with thirst and a close siege; and it stood at the foot of the mount Sion.

the manner beforementioned, it was thereby evident that he had broken the sabbath, and so came not from God. but was an impostor, who consequently had no such virtue or piety as could contribute any thing to this matter. The poor blind man, however, would not recede from the truth; for he said, "Whether he be a sinner, or no, I cannot tell; but this I certainly know, that whereas I was blind, I now, through him, enjoy the blessing of sight." This recognition of Jesus very greatly incensed the Jews, insomuch that they taxed him with being his disciple; boasting that themselves were the disciples of Moses, but as for Jesus, they knew not whence he was. The poor man in the simplicity and zeal of his heart, willing to do justice to his physician, says, "It is strange that one should do such miracles as these, and you learned men know not whether he be sent from God or not. allowed on all hands that an impostor or false teacher is not enabled by God to work such great miracles, but only pious and faithful servants of God, that came to do his will, not their own. It is above all human power to open the eyes of one born blind: if he were not sent and empowered by God, he could never do such things as these." This provoked them so much, that they first stigmatized him with the greatest reproach imaginable, that his being born blind was a mark and character of some extraordinary evil in him, which made him very unfit to teach doctors and rabbies in matters of this moment; and then they cast him out of the synagogue with disgrace. But Jesus, meeting him, received him into the church; for he informed him that he was the Christ: the man became enlightened; believed him, and paid the acknowledgment and adoration to him, that was due to the Messiah. But the Pharisees blasphemed: for such was the dispensation of the divine mysteries, that the blind should see; and they which think they see clearly should become blind, because they had not the excuse of ignorance to extenuate their sin; but in the midst of light they shut their eyes, and doted upon darkness, therefore did their sin remain.

Notwithstanding the obstinacy of the Jews, and the repeated instances of their malice and prejudice against Jesus and his doctrine, he continued his sermon to the

Pharisces. For speaking of the properties of a good shepherd, and the lawful way of admission; he proved them to be thieves and robbers, because they refused to enter in by him, who is the door of the sheep. And upon the same ground he reproved all those false Christs, who after him, should usurp the title of Messiah; and proved his own office by an argument which no other shepherd would use; Because he laid down his life for his sheep. Some would eat the flesh, others would take the fleece; but none but himself would die for his sheep: but he should die first, and then would he gather his sheep together into one fold; intimating thereby the calling of the Gentiles. To which purpose he was enabled by his Father to lay down his life, and to take it up; and had also endeared them to his Father, that they should be preserved unto eternal life; and no power should be able to take them out of his hand, or the hand of his Father. For because Jesus was united to the Father, the Father's care preserved his Son's flock. But the Jews, to requite him for these divine sermons and excellent discourses, resumed their old argument of taking up stones to cast at him, pretending he had blasphemed. But Jesus proved it to be no blasphemy to call himself the Son of God, because they to whom the word of God came are in Scripture called Gods. But nothing could satisfy them, whose temporal interest was concerned not to consent to such doctrine, which would save their souls by endangering their worldly advantages.

After this, the Jews sought again to take him; but he escaped out of their hands, and went away beyond Jordan, where John at first baptized; which gave the people occasion to remember that John had done no miracle, but Jesus had performed many; besides, John, whom all men did revere and highly esteem for his office and sanctity, gave testimony to Jesus. Thus by comparing these things,

many were inclined to believe in him.

After this, Jesus knowing that the harvest was great, and as yet few labourers; and that there were many ready to receive the gospel when it should be preached to them, directed his disciples to pray the Lord of the harvest to incline men's hearts to undertake this office of going and Vol. II.

revealing it to them; for as yet there were very few for so great a work. Beside the twelve apostles, he therefore chose seventy others, to be to him as disciples were wont to be to the prophets, that is, to go on his errands as he should appoint them; which they did by two together, as harbingers proclaiming his approach, whither he meant to come. In the preamble \* of their commission he tells them they must expect to meet with dangers and ill treatment; "Yet let not that deter you, or put you upon making provision for your journey. Heal the sick, preach that the kingdom of God is approaching. Whereever ye shall be ill treated, shake off the dust of your shoes against that place as a testimony of their obstinacy and inhospitality, and of their approaching ruin. that despiseth the warnings that you give them, despiseth me that sent you; and he that depiseth me, despiseth God that sent me; the affront offered to you is the same as if offered to me." The seventy having executed their commission, returned, and with great joy addressed themselves to Jesus, telling him, that by the power and virtue of his name the very devils were become subject to them. Jesus told them it was no wonder, for he had beheld Satant as lightning fall from heaven; and that it was determined that the prince of devils should be dethroned, and fall from his great power in the world, as lightning when it vanisheth away. Moreover Jesus, to shew the satisfaction he received, enlarged their commission, by an additional power over the enemy in all manner of circumstances, together with an immunity from all danger. Then it was that the blessed Jesus rejoiced in spirit, giving glory to God, that he had made his revelation to babes, and sucklings: which was an act of infinite wisdom, mercy, and condescension to the weakness of man, mixed with all justice towards the contemners of his promises.

About this time, a certain lawyer (one of those who studied and expounded the law of Moses) came forward

<sup>\*</sup> Preamble. See Luke x. 3, &c.

<sup>†</sup> Satan. See Luke x. 18.

<sup>‡</sup> Rejoiced. See Luke x. 17. Matt. xi. 25.

with much self-consequence and secret contempt of Jesus, proposing a plausible question, but with a design to involve him in a difficulty. He begged to be informed what he must do; for the attainment of eternal life. question been proposed with a humble and teachable disposition, our Lord would doubtless have given a direct and explicit answer; but knowing the proud and captious temper of the Scribe, he replied in a way which might tend to humble or silence him. He therefore referred him to the demands of the law, upon obedience to which the Scribe placed his dependence, assuring him a complete compliance with those claims, of perfect love to God and man, would secure to him the blessing desired. do, and thou shalt live;" as if he had said "Perform, punctually and perpetually, without interruption or imperfection, all the injunctions of the holy and spiritual law of God, and eternal life shall be thine; but, remember, that the least deviation or defect will ruin thee for ever."\*

The Scribe, willing to stand on his own defence, and to evade conviction, proposed another question—"Who is my neighbour?" It should seem that he, like all others who seek salvation by their own doings, was desirous of narrowing the demands of the law as much as possible, and reducing the number of those to whom the duties of love were owing. Our Lord, wisely took this occasion of confuting the prevalent notion that neighbours were only such persons as lived near each other, or were connected by the ties of blood or religion. He therefore shewed, by a parable, that we ought to extend our kindness to all our fellow-creatures in distress, of whatever nation or profession, even to those who have been separated from us by party quarrels and distinctions.

"A certain traveller," said our Lord, "going from Jerusalem to Jericho, was set upon by thieves, who not only rifled him of his clothes and money, but so dangerously

<sup>\*</sup> Ever. In this manner, St. Paul speaks, Gal. iii. 10, "For as many as are of the works of the law," that is, who seek justification by it, "are under the curse;" for it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

wounded him, that they left him almost expiring on the ground. By chance a Priest came that way, and saw the poor wretch weltering in his blood: but the sight did not affect him, he passed along unconcerned. Next came a Levite, as void of tenderness and humanity as the priest. At last the groans of the poor wretch stirred up the curiosity of a Samaritan to see the cause, which he no sooner discovered, but, moved with compassion, he went to him, raised his head, recalled his fainting spirits, and closed his gaping wounds with healing balsams; then mounting him on his own beast he gently conveyed the man to the first inn, where at his own cost he entertained him whilst he staid with him, and at his departure promised the host to be at whatever further expence should be incurred." Our blessed Saviour applying this parable to the lawyer, asked him, which he thought was neighbour to the poor traveller? The lawyer replied, "Undoubtedly he that was kind, and careful of him." Then says he to the lawyer, "Go thou and do likewise." Hereby plainly intimating, that no distance of country or religion destroyed the true notion of neighbourhood, but every person with whom we converse in peace and charity is that neighbour, whom we are to love as ourselves.

The holy Jesus knowing, though not dreading the malice of the Jews, who in many repeated instances had attempted his life, resolved at present to prevent any mischief by withdrawing from all populous places, and leaving Jerusalem, he came to a village called Bethany; where he was cheerfully and generously received by Martha, who making great preparation for his entertainment, to express her joy and affection to his person, desired Jesus to dismiss her sister Mary from his feet, who sat there feasting herself with the sweetness of his doctrine, and altogether inattentive to any provision for his entertainment. our Lord commended Mary's choice; and though he did not slight Martha's civility, yet he preferred Mary's sanctity of affection to Martha's generosity. "Thou takest a great deal of unnecessary pains," says he to Martha: "but the one only thing which is absolutely necessary, the hearing my word in order to the keeping of it, is a more acceptable thing to me, than the entertaining me with so much

solicitude and diligence, and the advantage of this will con-

tinue with Mary to all eternity."

Upon occasion of our blessed Lord's frequent retiring to prayer, his disciples took into consideration how needful it was for them to be directed in a right performance of that duty, and thereupon one of them, at his coming to them, besought him to give them a form or model of prayer for their direction, in like manner as John the Baptist had instructed his disciples. Jesus therefore gave them that excellent pattern of prayer which we call the Lord's prayer. He encouraged them to pray,\* by the consideration of the divine goodness and fatherly affection, far more indulgent to his sons than natural fathers are to their dearest offspring, and adds a gracious promise of success to them that pray; "Ask and it shall be given to you." Then he exhorts them to perseverance in prayer, † to be constant and diligent in the performance of the duty, not only in respect of God, to whom it is due, but of themselves, whose petitions by assiduity are most likely to be obtained. After this, being invited to dine with a Pharisee, he freely inveighed against the ridiculous superstition and hypocritical ostentation of the Pharisees; who affecting external purity in their manner of living, neglected to cleanse their souls from internal impurities. Instead of which traditional formalities he advises them to inward holiness and works of charity which are far more pleasing and acceptable to God than all the rites of outward purification. "Ye Pharisees," said he, "give tythe of the meanest product of your gardens, but omit the principal duties to God and man. These are the main things which God requires of you; though the other performances of paying tythes exactly according to the law and custom among you ought not to be neglected." Then pronouncing a woe to the Scribes and Pharisees, he tells them they are like graves overgrown with grass, and they which see their specious outsides, know not that within are dead men's bones and putrefaction, and so are polluted by At this a member of the Sanhedrim was so of-

<sup>\*</sup> Pray. Luke xi. 1.

fended, that he told Jesus, "This speech of thine seems to reflect on us, and the gravity of our places and persons." To which the holy Jesus replied, "Woe be to you for that hypocrisy of yours, in appearing to bear such respect, as to rebuild the tombs of those prophets whom your fathers killed, you yourselves having as bloody thoughts

against those that are now sent to you."

About this time one of the company, seeing with what authority he reproved and decided among the people, addressed himself to our Lord, saying, "Sir, there is a controversy between my brother and me about dividing our patrimony, I desire to avoid the delays of a litigious suit at law, and refer the matter to you to conclude between us." But Jesus declined the office of an arbitrator. as not choosing to interfere in the temporal concerns of Then he preached against covetousness, and the placing our happiness in worldly possessions, applying the parable of a rich man, whose store was too copious for his barns; for projecting with himself to enlarge his barns and lay up all in them, never thinking in the least of dispensing to the necessity of others, any part of his superfluous possessions, he proposed to indulge himself in voluptuousness, and stupidly enjoy himself in his perishing goods: but he was soon snatched from the possession of them, and his soul taken from him in the violence of a rapid and hasty sickness in the space of one night. This is directly the case of any one that makes no use of this increase and plenty, but only to possess it, and provide for himself by it, not thinking of employing a suitable proportion of his wealth to the relief of the necessitous, and the service of God. Then discoursing of the divine providence and care over us, he descends to demonstrate it in the wild flowers and grass of the field, those beautiful ornaments of nature, which the providence of God nourishes and preserves. "Entertain not therefore, said he, any solicitous thoughts about your worldly affairs; let no uneasy anxieties disturb your minds for such things; for your heavenly Father which designed you to an everlasting kingdom, will not fail to allow you your portion here of those things that are useful for you." Then he again exhorted to alms-deeds, to watchfulness and preparation against the sudden and unexdeath. And in answer to Peter's question, whether Christ spoke particularly to his apostles and disciples, or to all, he described the offices of his ministers, under the title of stewards and governors of their Lord's houses; teaching them gentleness and sobriety, and not to do evil upon the confidence of their Lord's absence and delay; and instructing the people even of themselves to judge what is right concerning the signs of the coming of the Son of man. And the end of all these discourses was, that all men

should repent and be saved.

Whilst Jesus was pressing these discourses on the people, there were present some who told him of the Galileans,\* whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. Jesus replied, that these external accidents, though they be sad and 'calamitous, are yet no arguments of condemnation against the persons of the men, to convict them of greater guilt than others, upon whom no such visible signs have been inflicted. The purpose of such awful events is, that we should repent, lest we perish in the like judgment, applying to this the parable of the barren fig-tree, which after much care and expence bare no fruit, intimating thereby, "This people hath been long unprofitable, made no returns for God's husbandry bestowed on them, and yet God hath given them space to repent, and sent his Son to dress and manure them; and if this do not succeed, there is nothing to be expected but destruction and ruin-

At the same time that Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, he observed a woman that for the space of eighteen years had laboured under a sore disease inflicted

<sup>\*</sup> Galileans. These were a faction of one Judas Gaulonita, a sort of people that taught it to be unlawful to pay tribute to strangers, or to pray for the Romans; and because the Jews did both, they refused to communicate in their sacred rites, and would sacrifice apart: at which separate solemnity, when Pilate the Roman deputy had apprehended many of them, he caused them to be slain, causing them to perish on the same altars. These were of the province of Judea, but of the same opinion with those who taught in Galilee, from whence the sect had its appellation.

on her by the agency of an evil spirit.\* Calling the woman to him, he told her she was free from her infirmity, and confirmed it by imposition of hands; which finished the cure, for the woman immediately became straight, and glorified God. Upon this cure, a certain ruler of the synagogue took occasion to renew the old question about the observation of the sabbath; for it was on the sabbath that Jesus had healed the woman. The ruler therefore told him there was time enough on the six days of the week to do these offices, and not to violate the sabbath-day by performing them. But Jesus made him ashamed by an argument drawn from their own practice, who loose an ox from the stall on the sabbath, and lead him away to watering. Ought not then this woman, on whom Satan hath for so many years inflicted a sore disease, to be healed of it?

After this, intending to go to Jerusalem, he passed through the towns and cities of Judea, preaching the same doctrine he had formerly taught them, and daily adding new precepts and cautions; adverting to the multitude† of them that perish, and the fewness of them that shall be saved, that they should not be led away with the example of the many that neglected the present opportunity, and afterwards would not find admission when they should desire it, either into the church here, or the kingdom of God at the day of judgment; that the gospel should at length be removed from the obstinate Jews, and heaven also; that care and industry was required to obtain the end of our christian faith and hope; and that a faint formal seeking of him, a desiring the reward upon no farther pretences, than that the gospel hath been preached among them, and that they have eat and drank in Christ's presence, would not suffice without the performance of all that Christ requires of us. As for others, be their pretences and confidences never so great, they shall at the day of judgment be utterly rejected, and their wicked doings rewarded with everlasting fire. And then what

<sup>\*</sup> Spirit. See Luke xiii. 16.

<sup>+</sup> Multitude. See Luke xiii. 24, &c.

a restless torment will it be, to see the fathers of the old world, that never saw or heard Christ preached among them, as you confess you have, received by God into his kingdom, and yourselves excluded? and that though but few Jews should receive the faith, yet disciples should come from all quarters of the world, and should be received and entertained in the kingdom of God: and the Gentiles, that are now afar off, shall be admitted to Christ's favour, whilst the present Jews through their obstinacy should be cast out.

Whilst Jesus was instructing the people and performing miracles among them in this manner, some of the Pharisees, who could not with any longer patience bear his power and hear his doctrine, being desirous to get rid of him, for a pretence, suggested the danger he was in from Herod, if he staid any longer there, saying, "Be gone out of Galilee, Herod's jurisdiction; for if thou stayest here, he will put thee to death." But Jesus, who would not in the least diminish his prophetic character and commission by betraying any dread or fear, bids them, "Go tell that fox Herod, that I attend the decree of my Father, and in the mean time perform the office for which I was sent, not fearing what he can do to me. Behold I cast out devils, and cure diseases for the present; and after a while, when my course is finished, I am to suffer death." After this reprehension of Herod's subtilty and design to kill him, he prophesied that he should die at Jerusalem, and intimates great future woes and miseries to the Jews for neglecting this their day of visitation, and for killing the prophets and messengers sent from God.

Being upon an invitation persuaded to go on a sabbath-day, and dine with one of the Pharisees of great quality, a ruler or member of one of their consistories, they that had thus invited him treacherously, observed what he would do, on purpose to take some advantage against him, a thing contrary to all the laws of hospitality. But he knowing their malice, by way of prevention, stopped their mouths with the same argument he had used to those that reprehended him for curing the infirm woman on

the sabbath-day.\* The object which was before him, and by which they proposed to ensnare him, was a person afflicted with the dropsy. But Jesus to prevent their malice asked them this question: "Is the working a cure on a sick man a thing forbidden, and unlawful to be done on the sabbath-day?" The question was plain, and so put, that his enemies were at that time disappointed; and Jesus taking no farther notice of them cured the poor man of his

dropsy, and dismissed him.

Whilst these things were transacting at this dinner, the holy Jesus observed how fond the Scribes and Pharisees were to take precedency of others at the feast; and therefore knowing their inclinations, he spake a parable to them, which imported how much more honourable it is for a man to set himself below, than above his place, and how certain a way it is for him to get honour: for humility is the only thing that is valued or commended, either by God or man. Then he reproached them for want of charity in their entertainments, inviting none but those that were their equals or superiors, and consequently able to return their compliment; but totally neglecting the hungry and necessitous poor. Upon this occasion, one repeated that known saying among the Jewish rabbins, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God; that is, it is much happier to be feasted by God in his kingdom than by any man on earth. To this Christ replied by a similitude, + confirming the truth of what that person said; but observing, at the same time, that this heavenly feast was what they had often been invited to, but still rejected the kind invitation, preferring their own worldly designs and advantages before it, for which they were rejected, and their room supplied by strangers.

<sup>\*</sup> Sabbath-day. The holy Jesus, that he might draw off and separate christianity from the yoke of ceremonies, by abolishing and taking off the strictest Mosaical rites, chose to do many of his miracles upon the sabbath, that he might do the work of abrogation and institution both at once. For though upon all days Christ wrought miracles, yet many reasons determined him to a more frequent working upon days of public ceremony and convention.

<sup>+</sup> Similitude. See Luke xiv. 16.

Going from the Pharisee's house, where he had dined, he was attended by a vast concourse of people, whom he informed what they must expect, if they intended to be his disciples. "He\* that doth not prefer me, says he, before all that is nearest to him, nay and life too, is not worthy to be my disciple. And whosoever doth not come with a preparation of mind to suffer any thing rather than part with me, is not fit to engage with me. For as he that begins to build, and hath not a stock to hold out, leaves his work imperfect: or as he that designs a war, and hath not men and money enough to go through with it, had better never engage in it; so he that undertakes to be a Christian, must resolve to renounce all that is precious to him in this world, or else he will not be able to persevere to the end.

The winter now approaching, and the Jews' feast of dedication being at hand, Jesus went up to Jerusalem to the feast, where he preached in Solomon's porch.† The Jews still jealous of the great influence he had over the people, attempted to seize him; but he was aware of their design: for retiring from thence, he went beyond Jordan, where he taught the people in an elegant and persuasive discourse concerning the mercy of God in accepting penitents, in that admirable parable of the prodigal Son; whose father having heaped up a fortune, at the importunity of his youngest son, divided his substance between his two children. The youngest took his part, and immediately set out to visit distant countries, where in a short time and in luxurious living he spent that wealth his parent had given him. When he had spent all, a dreadful famine afflicted that country; in vain he applied to those that had shared in the consumption of his fortune; they are as much strangers to him now, as he was to grace in the midst of his prodigality. Hunger, an excellent monitor, soon instructed him what to do; he addressed him-

<sup>\*</sup> He. Luke xi. 26, Matt. x. 37.

<sup>†</sup> Porch. Solomon's porch was that part of the temple which stood intire from the first ruins.

self to a person, from whom he received no other comfort than an offer of tending his swine. Want of bread compelled him, and he accepted the offer, and would gladly have shared with them in their diet of husk's and acorns. Whilst he meditated on his sad condition, necessity reduced him to his reason, and the only means left to redress his misery. He acknowledged his sin against his heavenly and earthly fathers, then his own unworthiness to be admitted to mercy, and lastly to be restored to favour. Armed with this resolution, he directed his steps towards his injured father's house. The tender parent discovered the miserable object, and with eager fondness ran to him, embraced and kissed him, and reinstated him in his paternal love; proclaiming a jubilee in his family for the return of this prodigal, who having been dead and lost in sin, was now alive again to repentance and holiness of

Then he discourses of the design of the Messiah coming into the world, to recover men from their sin and danger, in the parables of the lost sheep and piece of money. After this he taught them to employ their present opportunities and estates, by laying them out in acts of mercy and religion, that when their souls shall be dismissed from this life, they may be entertained in everlasting habitations. This he inforced under the figure of an unjust, but prudent steward, "who having abused his trust by wasting and embezzling his master's goods, is called to make up his accounts, for he was no longer to be retained under the character of steward. This summons presented to his anxious thoughts the sad prospect of a miserable poverty. He thought it below the dignity of his character to work, and he was ashamed to beg. To provide therefore against the approaching storm, he sends for his master's debtors, and asked them what they owed in goods or rent. The first tells him he owed a hundred measures of oil. He bids him take his bill with speed and make it only fifty; and so in proportion he accounts with the rest. This the unjust steward did in hopes of being relieved by his master's debtors when he was discarded his service." By which parable our Saviour shews, how much more provident worldly

men are to secure something for the remainder of their life, than the sons of light who are born to be injured and abused here; yet from hence, he teaches them how to secure friends, which shall continue long beyond this transitory world. Therefore he advises them to make provision \* for themselves, by so using the fading wealth, with which they are intrusted here, that when these transitory comforts shall forsake them, they may be received into heaven.

Wherever the blessed Saviour of the world went, the fame of his miracles and doetrine attracted to him a vast retinue, some out of curiosity, others out of necessity still following him, but none so diligently watched, or rather pursued him, as the Pharisees, who most industriously laid hold on all opportunities to accuse him. The most ensnaring question they could think of, was that of divorces; whether it was lawful for a man upon every occasion to put away his wife. Jesus limiting the permissions of these separations to the case of fornication only, tells them, "Ye cannot but remember the strict union between man and wife, which was appointed by God in the creation; where as soon as they were both created, this was determined, that man was to forsake all and cleave to his wife, continuing as inseparably with her as if she were part of his own flesh. And therefore since they are thus directed by God, this divine institution ought not to be altered by man." The Pharisees thinking they now had the advantage of the argument, object to the precept † of Moses, wherein he allowed the

<sup>\*</sup> Provision. See Luke xvi. 9.

<sup>†</sup> Precept. Deut. xxiv. 1, 2, 3. The words in St. Matt. xix. 7, are; "Why then did Moses command to give a writing of divorce?" In Deut. xxiv. 1, they are somewhat different, "Let him write her a bill of divorcement." These versions seem to make Moses and our blessed Saviour to authorize the giving of bills of divorce; whence Libertines and Jews may think they have a liberty to put away their wives, and look upon that custom as an express command of God. But the translators have not been exact enough in rendering the words of the original, which signifies sometimes a command, sometimes a permission. As when David says, 2 Sam. xvi. 10, "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zerniah? Let him curse, &c." And as when God says, Isai. xiii. 3, "That he

husband in some cases to give a bill of divorce to the wife, in this manner permitting him to put her away. In answer to this Jesus replies thus; "God in the Mosaical economy, knowing your obstinacy and perverse inclinations, lest you should run into greater sins, allowed a dispensation in this point, by tolerating divorces. But this you see was very different from the appointment of God in the first institution of marriage. And accordingly I now determine, that whosoever shall use that liberty so frequent among you, to put away his wife for any lesser cause than that of fornication, and then thinks himself free to marry again, that man is guilty of adultery in so doing, and so is he that marrieth her that is divorced, for he marrieth another man's wife, which is committing adultery."

After this, discoursing on God's wise dispensation of the good things of this world, he shewed by way of parable that we cannot easily enjoy a heaven here and hereafter; and that the infelicities of our lives, if we are pious, shall end in a blessed condition. This he exemplified in the parable\* of a rich man and a poor one. "The rich man

commanded his sanctified ones, and called his mighty ones for his anger." Where it is impossible they can signify command, since God so expressly forbids to curse the king, and since he is not capable of commanding tyranny, as some have well observed. These words also sometimes signify a promise, as Psal. cxxxii. 3, where it is evident we must translate, " For God has promised the blessing, and not God has commanded the blessing." The same amendment must be made John x. 18, "This promise (not this commandment) I received of my Father." And John xii. and xv. " And I know that his promise is everlasting life." For it was not a commandment which the Son received from the Father, "That if he did lay down his life he might take it up again," but a promise mentioned, Ps. xvi. 10, "Thou wilt not suffer thine holy one to see corruption;" and life eternal is also a promise and not a commandment. Therefore when these expressions, which signify different things, do occur, we ought to have regard to the subject treated on, and since our Saviour expressly calls what Moses did in this matter only a permission, Matt. xix. 8, and mentions the first marriage, which was quite contrary to a divorce, we should translate, " Why then did Moses suffer to give a bill of divorcement?"

<sup>\*</sup> Parable. Some will have this to be a true story, and not a similitude; of which number is Euthymius, who from the tradition of the Hebrews nameth

abounded in all the comforts the world could afford, which he selfishly applied to the purposes of his own pride and luxury, squandering away the wealth of princes to gratify his wanton appetite. Whilst on the contrary, Lazarus, poor, sick and afflicted, in vain begs the fragments of his extravagancies to support him. At length wearied with cares and worn out with diseases, Lazarus dies, and is by a guard of angels safely conveyed to Abraham's bosom, where he receives the recompence of the reward. Nor can the rich man's wealth bribe the impartial hand of Divine Justice; all his earthly power cannot screen him from the all-searching eye of that just Judge, who without regard to his superior station, summoned him to appear at his awful tribunal. He also dies, but a scene ensues far different from that of Lazarus. Horrible fiends instantly drag him down to the abyss of horror and eternal pain; where lifting up his eyes to heaven he sees Lazarus enfolded in the arms of Abraham, whilst himself is afflicted with unintermitting torments. In vain he begs for water to cool his scorched tongue; his doom is passed, which nothing can reverse. Abraham rebukes his importunate request with a mild reply: Son, says he, all thy portion of abundance and prosperity, of uninterrupted ease and felicity, thou hast already enjoyed in thy life-time, and spent upon thyself without communicating them to any that wanted relief; and on the other side, Lazarus has had all his portion of afflictions already, and now it is but just that he should have his bliss, and thou thy torment. But besides, there is an irreversible decree passed upon thee, and it is impossible for any to release thee." Finding no hopes for himself, he interceded for his relations left behind him, who by some seasonable admonition might be cautioned from coming into this place of torment. Abraham tells him, they have Moses and the prophets for their guides and instructors; besides, Lazarus could no more

him Nymensis. But there are more of a contrary opinion, and who can prove that the title of this passage of Luke xvi. 19, is called, " a parable of a king of flesh and blood."

have liberty to quit the joys of heaven to go on this errand to his kindred, than himself could be released from

his irremediable pains.

The conclusion of this affecting parable, besides the moral of the wise distribution of our goods to the necessitous, declares also this important truth, that the ordinary means of salvation are the express revelation of Scripture, and the ordinances of God's appointment; and whose-ever neglects these shall not be supplied with means extraordinary; or if he were indulged with them, they would

be totally ineffectual.

Among the many instances of human frailty which daily came under his inspection, he took special notice of the pharisaical pride, which, through a conceited opinion of mistaken perfection, made men carelessly overlook their own faults, and superciliously censure and condemn others. This the blessed Jesus severely condemns in the following parabolical discourse. Two men went up into the temple\* to pray; the one a Pharisee, the other a Publican. The Pharisee approaches with praise to God, but contempt of his brother; and boasting of his virtues, but forgetting his sins, he thus presumptuously addressed himself: I thank thee, O God, that I am not like other men, guilty of extortion, injustice, or adultery; or like this vile publican, unworthy to approach thee: I fast twice t every week, and pay duly my tithes of every thing which I possess. Such was the detail of his goodness, such the only foundation of his hope

<sup>\*</sup> Temple. In the temple there were two courts, one for the Jews, and another for the Gentile Proselytes that lived among them. Of these Gentile Proselytes there were two sorts; the proselytes of righteousness, who were those that had undertaken the whole law, and were circumcised; and the Gentile proselytes of the gate. The former of these were admitted with the Jews into the inner-court; but the latter, which were not circumcised, were by the Jews so far accounted unclean, according to the law, that they were not permitted to come into that court of the temple called Holy, where the Jews were; and in that court, where these latter Gentiles worshipped the Jews kept a market.

<sup>†</sup> Twice. That is, every Monday and Thursday, the second and fifth day's of the week, on which they were wont to hear the law read in their synagogies.

towards God. His devotions, if such they may be called, contained not a single petition; and, though he pretended to thank God, his object was only to compliment himself. But such a sacrifice as this is an abomination to the Lord, who has determined that "no flesh shall glory in

his presence."

The humble publican, standing at an awful distance in the court of the Gentiles, with a dejected heart and modest penitence deploring his sins, not daring so much as to lift up his guilty eyes to heaven, but laying his hand upon his unworthy, yet contrite heart, implores God's mercy on him a sinful wretch. The mercy which he asked, he obtained, for he went down to his house justified, rather than the other; he returned to his habitation in peace, having obtained acceptance with God. such contrite, broken-hearted persons, the promises of the gospel are peculiarly addressed: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Such was the encouraging design of our Saviour in this parable, which he concluded by saying, " Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

The multitude, perceiving by daily experience, the great benefit that persons of adult years received by the bare touch of our blessed Lord, desirous that their tender babes might also share in the blessing, brought their infants to partake of his divine benediction. But the disciples, thinking it below the dignity of their master to take notice of such little children, at first refused admittance to those who brought them. But Jesus, calling for the children, chides his disciples for their mistake in refusing them, charging them to introduce them for the future, adding this encouraging observation, "That of such was the kingdom of heaven;" intimating by it, that none but such as were endued with infant simplicity could enjoy any share in the privileges of his kingdom. Then laying his hands upon them, he gave them his blessing. Happy infants! who so early received their Saviour's benediction in order to a larger share of his grace for the future.

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As he was departing from the place, in which the last occurrence happened, a certain person came running to him, evidently with much eagerness, and with profound veneration, acknowledging him as a divine teacher; for he kneeled down at his feet, and desired information from him on a subject of all others the most important.\* "Good master," said he, "what good thing shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?" Here, then, was a candidate for heaven, of a most promising appearance indeed. He was young, yet not addicted to sensual pleasures, for he attended with great exactness to the duties of morality, and discovered a serious concern about his future state. He was a ruler, a magistrate of some consequence, and possessed of considerable wealth. Yet, very unlike the generality of those in high life, he applied to Jesus, not with a disposition to cavil, but, as it should seem, with a desire of being instructed in the way of salvation.

The case was hopeful: and, 'from such a view of it, we might have been ready to conclude the man a real convert. But a little experience will teach us, not to be precipitate in our judgment, nor to rest with implicit confidence in any favourable circumstances. Jesus, who knew perfectly the bent of his mind, dealt with him in such a way as to shew his true character. He enquired. therefore, why he had given him the title of "good," since it properly belonged only to God. He did not thereby disclaim it, or in the least imply, that he possessed not the attributes of Deity, but examined on what ground the amiable youth had so addressed him, and whether he had done it on a full conviction of his dignity. The ruler, probably, was elated with a conceit of his own goodness, and his ability to do every thing required: on which account, to detect his erroneous notions, and evince his deficiencies, Jesus referred him to the law, assuring him, that he must keep the commandments in order to attain eternal life. We cannot so interpret this declaration, as to set aside the necessity of

<sup>\*</sup> Important. Matt. xix. 16, &c. Mark x. 17, 31. Luke xviii. 18, 30.

believing in the Son of God for salvation, or to ascribe to man a capacity, in himself, of yielding a complete obedience to God. But there is a peculiar propriety in putting those, who boast of their own righteousness and strength, upon considering the extent of their duty. We exhort them to bring forth their best performances, that they may compare them with the appointed rule, and to try what their most vigorous exertions can effect. " Keep the commandments;" but let one precept as well as another be regarded, and that in the utmost extent, so as to regulate your inward affection, no less than your outward practice. Such an unfeigned and perfect compliance is required from you at all times and in all circumstances, without weariness or interruption, even to your latest hour. Upon the least failure, you are rendered incapable of being justified by the works of the law; and you, who are most decent and orderly in your conduct, can obtain forgiveness no otherwise than by faith in the

Lord Jesus Christ, through the blood of his cross.

This young person, not knowing himelf and the defects of his obedience, presumptuously boasted that he had, from his earliest years, performed every duty enjoined in the second table, to which particularly Jesus referred him: and, in the vain confidence of his own sufficiency, he then asked, whether any thing further could be demanded of him. Ah! how gross the darkness, how fatal the delusion, by which men are so exalted in themselves, as to say, "I am innocent," or, "What lack I yet!" Jesus, however, looked with compassionate regard on the ruler, whose manners and disposition, in some respects, might be peculiarly engaging. But, as he resisted conviction in one way, he proved him in another, requiring him to give a special testimony of his entire submission to him. "One thing," said he, "thou lackest: go, and sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me." The strict injunction was more than the youth could bear, but not more than Jesus had a right to ordain: nor would those refuse to comply with it, who are truly sensible of their own demerit and the worth of the Saviour. The merchant,

who finds "the one pearl of great price," will sell all that he has, and buy it:\* for he will say, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."† Not so this man of fortune. He was disappointed, grieved, confounded; and instantly he betrayed the secret insincerity of his heart, which Jesus meant to detect by the trial here proposed. He gave up all further enquiries about the religion of the gospel; "he went away sorrowful," for this reason chiefly, that he was attached to the world, under all his promising appearances; and he foolishly preferred the enjoyment of his large possessions to the grace and salvation of Jesus.

When the apostles heard their master commanding the young man to sell all, and give to the poor, and follow him, Peter, in the name of the rest, began to think it was their own case, and the promise also might concern them, and asking him this question, "What shall we have, who have forsaken all, and followed thee?" Jesus answered, "That they should sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." And extending this blessing to every disciple that should forsake either house, wife, or children, or any advantage and possession in this life, for his or the gospel's sake, he promises them the reward of an hundred-fold by way of present comfort, and in the world to come glories and possessions in fruition and redundancy: "For they that are last shall be first, and the first shall be last." The despised people of this world shall reign like kings, and their contempt of it shall swell up to an endless glory, and their poverty to an eternal satisfaction. And these rewards shall not be accounted according to the privileges of nations, or priority of vocation, but readiness of mind and obedience, and sedulity of operation after being called.

But lest the disciples should not perfectly understand what he said of the "last being first, and the first last," he explains himself in the following parable: "A certain landlord, whose care was as early as the rising-sun,

<sup>\*</sup> It. Matt. xiii. 46.

went out betimes to the market-place, where day-labourers kept their stand in expectation of employment, to hire labourers to work in his vineyard, and having agreed with a certain number of them for a penny \* a day, he set them to work. Wanting still more help, he went out about the third hour, † and in the usual place he found several standing there to be hired, with whom he also agreed in proportion to the time. Again about the sixth and ninth hour ‡ he went out, and hired more: and about the eleventh hour \ he did the same. At night he bid his steward call the labourers, and pay them; and beginning with them that were last hired, he paid them the whole day's wages: but when they came who were first hired, and had laboured from the morning, they expected to receive more than those who came late into the vinevard; but they were disappointed, for they received no more than what they were hired for. Upon which they murmur, saying, Thou hast given to them as much wages as to us who have laboured all the day long. of the vineyard tells them he paid them according to their agreement; and as for those who came later to work, it was an act of generosity in himself to reward them as he pleased, it being their misfortune that they were not sooner employed, and that being master of his own substance he might dispense it as he thought fit, and give as much to them that came at the eleventh hour as to those that came first, and who laboured as honestly for the time as they Thus the last shall be first, and first last.

Whilst the blessed Jesus was in Galilee, he receives a message from the two female disciples and sisters, Martha and Mary, intreating him to hasten into Bethany, to re-

<sup>\*</sup> Penny. Our seven-pence half-penny.

<sup>†</sup> Third hour. About our nine of the clock in the morning.

<sup>‡</sup> Sixth and ninth hour. Twelve of the clock at noon, and three in the afternoon.

<sup>§</sup> Eleventh bour. About five in the evening.

<sup>#</sup> Last. This parable relates literally to the case of the Jews, who murmured that the same church privileges should be extended to the Gentiles as to themselves: It displays also the sovereignty of God in the bestowment of all his favours.

lieve their sick brother Lazarus, who was in imminent danger. But he deferred\* his going till Lazarus was dead; purposing to make an uncommon display of his divine power and goodness in a glorious miracle, which should produce much honour to God. Therefore, after two days' delay, he called his disciples to accompany him into Judea. When Jesus arrived at Bethany, Lazarus, who had been dead four days, was buried, and in a state of putrefaction. Martha and Mary hearing of their Lord's approach, go out to meet him; and pouring out a flood of pious tears for their dear brother, throw themselves at his feet, wishing he had arrived sooner, for then they were assured their brother would not have died. At the sight of these mourning sisters, Jesus suffered the passions of pity and humanity, which after some perturbation of mind broke into tears. After this melancholy salutation, Jesus having, by his words of comfort, strengthened the faith of the two sisters, he desired to be conducted to the place where Lazarus was buried, and commanding the stone to be removed from the grave, making an address of adoration and thanksgiving to his Father for his continual readiness to hear him, he says, with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" and he that was dead, came forth from his bed of darkness, with his grave-clothes on, who, being loosed by some of the numerous spectators, at the command of Jesus, went to his habitation at Bethany.

The performance of this miracle affected the multitude very differently; some were convinced, and believed on him; others were filled with wonder, yet maliciously went and informed the Pharisees; who, upon that advice, summoned their great council, whose solemn cognizance was for the greater causes of prophets, kings, and of the holy law: where one breaking silence, says, "It is not a time for us to sit still, and permit this man to proceed in the performance of these miracles without interruption: for if we suffer him, all men will believe on him, and the Ro-

<sup>\*</sup> Deferred. See John xi. 4, 5, 6, &c.

mans\* will destroy both our temple and nation, our religion and government, and wholly enslave us." At this great assembly it was that Caiaphas the High-priest prophesied† that one should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And from this time they entered into a combination, resolving to put him to death. But Jesus knowing they had passed a decretory sentence against him, did not perform any public miracles among the people of Judea, but retired to the city of Ephraim, in the tribe of Judah, near the desart, where he continued a few

days till the time of the passover.

Now when the feast of the passover was nigh at hand, as Jesus with his disciples was going to Jerusalem, he informed them what the event of his journey would be, that the Jews should deliver him to the Gentiles; that they should scourge him, and mock him, and crucify him, and the third day he should rise again. Upon this mention of his resurrection, which they vainly presumed would be the time of his taking all his greatness upon him, the mother of James and John came to Jesus, and prostrating herself at his feet, desired that her sons might have the first places in his kingdom: for all the discourses of his passion, or intimations of the spiritual nature of his kingdom had not yet corrected their false apprehensions of it, as a state of temporal grandeur. But Jesus, who knew the weakness of their understandings on this head, gave

<sup>\*</sup> Romans. The Jewish council, seeing the miracles which Jesus did, this especially of raising Lazarus, did very much fear that professing himself to be the Messiah, he would soon attempt to make himself king, and by the reputation which he had gained among the people, be quickly assisted in it, if he were not timely hindered. If this were done, the consequence would be that the Romans, to whom they were already subject, looking upon this as a rebellion, would come with an army, and utterly destroy them.

<sup>†</sup> Prophesied. See John xi. 50, 51. Caiaphas spake in words that were a direct prophecy of what God had now designed should come to pass: not that he meant it in that sense, or thought at all of prophesying; but being in a place of authority among the Jews at that time, he was a fit person for God to make use of as his minister to foretel the purpose of God, that Christ should die for the Jews.

<sup>†</sup> Mother. See Matt. xx. 20, &c.

them an answer adapted to their present conceptions, and future condition, telling them, "That if they desired the first post of honour in his kingdom, and to be nearest his person, they must take the greatest share of the bitter cup of his sufferings, and then sit in his kingdom, if his heavenly Father had prepared it for them: but as to any privilege of honour or dignity above others, they to whom his Father had designed it should certainly enjoy it." This excited the displeasure of the other apostles, who were offended with the ambition of the two brothers. But Jesus, the true peace-maker, to prevent any misunderstanding between them, dissuades them from all thoughts of supremacy, by telling them, "That though the rulers or kings of the nations were served and benefited by their subjects, and received secular advantages by their pre-eminences, and that the emperors in like manner were over them, yet preference among them was to be attended with all the offices of servile humility, and that they must not expect to live after the manner of the heathen princes: for he among them that affected to be supreme, must be the servant of all the rest; and that Christ's kingdom here is not to be administered in a way from which they might derive splendor or profit, but in a way of charity; serving, relieving, providing, and dying, for his people, instead of requiring any such offices from them."\*

The blessed Jesus proceeding from hence to Jericho, with the usual attendance of the multitude, a fresh object of misery presents itself, on which he might exercise his

<sup>\*</sup> Them. On a similar occasion, our Lord reproved the ambition of the disciples, by taking a little child; and placing him in the midst of them, he said, I declare it to you as a most solemn and important truth, "That except ye be converted and turned from these ambitious and carnal views, and become like little children in lowliness and meekness, you will be so far from having any distinguished rank among my subjects, that ye shall by no means so much as enter at all into my kingdom, or enjoy any of its blessings."

It is but justice to the Apostles to observe, that after the ascension of Christ, and their reception of the Holy Spirit, they were entirely cured of the disease of ambition, and gladly took up their cross, following their humble leader.

compassion and power. Poor Bartimæus, \* the son of Timæus, who had long sat on the road, an humble supplicant to all charitable passengers for relief, hearing the noise of the vast crowd that passed by, asked the meaning of that numerous concourse; and being informed that Jesus of Nazareth was among them, with strong and impatient faith he cried, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me?" The standers-by bid him forbear his clamorous noise, supposing he begged an alms: but the gift he desired was of greater moment, and therefore he repeats his importunity, and cries, . "O Son of David have mercy upon me?" Upon this Jesus stopped, and ordering the blind man to be brought to him, demands of him the reason of his importunate cries; who in a humble manner replied, "Lord, restore my long-lost sight?" He had no sooner spoken, than the compassionate Jesus answered his request; for straightway his eyes receive the welcome light, and he with joy makes one of the admiring crowd that followed their Saviour.

As the holy Jesus passed through Jericho,† a certain man named Zaccheus, a person of wealth and figure among the publicans, being desirous of seeing Jesus, could not gratify his curosity in the crowd because he was low of stature, and therefore he climbs up a tree, from whence he might take a full view and survey of his sacred person. Jesus, observing the eager zeal of this curious publican, calls to him to descend, and invites himself to his house. The overjoyed Zaccheus, proud of this honour, hastens to receive his heavenly guest with the highest expressions of love and respect; and such was the power of divine grace upon his heart, that he instantly became a remarkable penitent, and thus expresses the feelings of his mind: "Lord, the half of my estate I give to the poor; and whomsoever I have defrauded, or as a publican, exacted from, more than was due, I am ready to make, according to the law, a four-fold restitution." This confession and repentance was the greatest entertainment any mortal

<sup>\*</sup> Bartimæus. See Mark x. 46, &c.

<sup>†</sup> Jericho. See Luke xix. 1, &c.

man could afford to our blessed Lord, who in return gives him this gracious reward, "This day are the mercies of the gospel dispensed to thee, Zaccheus, as being a believer, who, though a publican, art one to whom the promises

made to Abraham appertain."

About this time, our Saviour being not far\* from Jerusalem, upon occasion of his disciples apprehending that he would shortly take upon him the regal authority there, he spake this parable to them: " A certain man, heir to a great kingdom, took a long journey to possess† himself of it, and then to return again to the country where he was born, and over which he was to reign. And having many servants, he entrusted each of them with a sum‡ of money to be employed in trade during his absence, commanding them to improve it to the best advantage against his return. The reason of his journey to this distant country was, because his countrymen, over whom he was to reign, opposed themselves contumaciously against him, and disclaimed him for their king. At his return, he first examined his servants with whom he had entrusted his talents; he rewarded those who had improved their stock, and had been faithful in their trust, with gifts proportioned to their capacities and improvements; but the negligent servant, who had slothfully spent his time without any advantage, was condemned to perpetual confinement and darkness, and his talent transferred to him who had most advanced the interest of his prince during his absence." From whence arose that

<sup>\*</sup> Far. See Luke xix. 11, 12, &c.

<sup>†</sup> Possess. By this the blessed Jesus intimated that he was to suffer, and rise, and go to heaven to be installed in his kingdom there.

<sup>‡</sup> Sum. By this he intimated that the apostles were, after his departure, to preach to the Jews, in order to gain them to Christ; and to visit all their cities before he should himself appear in his regal dignity: and thus also were all inferior christians, as well as the apostles, to employ their diligence and industry, and according to their talents to bring in some increase to God.

<sup>§</sup> Disclaimed. This intimates the Jews standing out against the faith, as it was preached to them by the apostles after the resurrection.

christian axiom, "To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not, shall be taken away even what he hath." His servants having thus accounted with him, he proceeds to take cognizance of those rebellious countrymen (whose king he was by right) who, when he went to be inthroned in another kingdom, refused obedience to him. These therefore he called to a severe account, and commanding them to be put to the sword,\* they were executed as so many rebels.

After this, going from Jericho, he cured two blind men on the way. And six days before the passover, he proceeded to Bethany, where he was liberally entertained by Simon the leper,† being accompanied by Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, who sat at the table with Jesus. Mary,‡ to add to the grandeur of the entertainment, having a vial or vase, of very costly ointment,∮ poured∥ it on Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair. The\*\* odour of the perfume soon diffused itself through every part of

<sup>\*</sup> Sword. This was the fate that soon befel the Jews after our blessed Saviour's inauguration in his kingdom in heaven.

<sup>†</sup> Leper. It is not probable that Simon was a leper at this time, but having been so at a former period, retained the name, by which he was distinguished from many others who bore the name of Simon, which was common among the Jews.

<sup>‡</sup> Mary. This was Mary the sister of Lazarus, not Mary Magdalen.

<sup>§</sup> Ointment. This is by the best interpreters called "Nard-pistick, or genuine Nard, free from all mixture or adulteration, which was a very great rarity, by reason of the nine sorts of herbs which (according to Pliny) imitate the true Nard.

Poured. The word in St. Mark, ch. xiv. v. 3, which in our translation is rendered "brake the box," is improperly applied, and remote from the meaning of the original Syntripsasa; as also is the word Alabastron unjustly rendered a Box: for it is very improbable that Mary should break a box or vessel of alabaster or marble, which all know to be hard; nor is it likely it was in the form of a box, but rather of a vial, which Mary shaking (for that is the proper signification of the word Syntripsasa) in order to break the coagulated parts of the rich balsam, and bring it into a liquid state; she then poured it out, and so anointed Jesus's feet with it. This I take to be the most proper way of rendering to these words, both according to the present occasion, and the genuine sense of them.

<sup>\*\*</sup> The. See Matt. xxvi. 6. Mark xiv. 3. John xii. 4.

the house, which denoted its great worth. But malice, which never long wants an opportunity of shewing itself, instructs the thief and traitor Judas, how to lay hold on any occasion, who repines at the vanity of this expence, (as he pretended,) because it might have been sold for three hundred pence,\* and have been given to the poor. But Jesus, who knew the malice of Judas, and the wickedness he was afterwards to perpetrate, in a very mild reply, tells them all, that this was an act of religion in Mary, who performed this as a fit ceremony to solemnize his approaching death, after which men used to be embalmed with perfumes and spices: This, therefore, as an act of religion was at this time more seasonable than an act of charity; for of the poor, said he, you have many and daily objects: but this is the last opportunity she could have of expressing her love to me, who am suddenly to be taken from you.

It being presently known that Lazarus, whom Jesus had lately raised from the dead, was one of the company that was treated by Simon the leper, the Jews flocked in great numbers to see him on whom the miracle was wrought, as well as the illustrious person who performed This excited much uneasiness in the jealous Sanhedrim, who having heard that the resurrection of Lazarus, gave occasion to a number of the Jews to believe on Jesus, they immediately consult upon the destruction; of Lazarus, as they had previously done concerning that

of Christ.1

Doddridge on John xii. 10.

<sup>\*</sup> Toree Hundred Pence. That is about Ten Pounds.

<sup>+</sup> Destruction. The Jews, enraged to perceive many converts made to Christ by the miracle of his raising Lazarus, determined to put him to death: but Epipharius reports that God, in his providence, was pleased to preserve him as a monument of his glories, and a testimony of the miracle which Jesus performed on him, thirty years after the death of Jesus. Epipham. contra Manich.

<sup>‡</sup> Christ: What a mixture of cruelty and folly was the conspiracy of the Pharisees to kill Lazarus? What was bis crime? or what could their bope be? Erom what death could not Christ have delivered him? or from what tomb could he not have recalled him? Yet something like this is the madness of all who hate and persecute others, for being the trophies of the Redeemer's victory and grace.

The next day, being the fifth before the passover, Jesus came to the foot of the mount of Olives, and sent his disciples to Bethphage, a little village in the neighbourhood, commanding them to unloose an ass\* and a colt, and to bring them to him, and to tell the owners it was done for the Master's service; and they did so. And when they brought the ass to Jesus, he rides † on him to Jerusalem; and the people having notice all the way he passed of his approach, took palm-branches in their hands, and went out to meet him, strewing boughs of trees and their garments in the road, crying out, "Hosannah ‡ to the Son of David:" which was a form of acclamation used to the honour of God in great assemblies and solemnities, and signifies adoration to the Son of David by the right of carrying branches. But this honour was so great and unusual to be rendered even to kings, that the Pharisees, knowing this to be an appropriate manner of address to God, said one to another, "Hear ye what these men say?" For they were troubled to hear the people pay such reverence to Jesus, being alarmed at this appearance of his growing reputation.

<sup>\*</sup> Ass. See Matt. xxi. 2, Mark xi. 2, Luke xix. 30, 31. The asses used in the east are far superior to ours, so that there was nothing mean or ridiculous in his riding on that animal. We read of Abraham, the family of Jair, and magistrates riding upon them. Gen. xxii. 3. Judge. v. 10. and x. 4, &c. We should also recollect that God, to keep the people of Israel in a more sensible dependence on himself forbade the use of horses; our Lord therefore, with a propriety worthy of himself, chose to make his humble, though public triumph, riding on an ass.

<sup>†</sup> Rides. Jesus rode not on account of any weariness, having formerly travelled through all Palestine on foot; but thereby, using that privilege which belonged to Judges, "Speak you that ride on white Asses," to signify his approbation of those due acclamations which he knew would that day be given him, v. 8, as to the Messiah; that so the prophecy, Isai. lxii. 11, and Zech. ix. 9, might be accomplished, wherein it is said, "That the king of the Jews, the Messiah, should come riding on an ass's foal," which though it were a meek, was yet also a royal gesture and ceremony.

<sup>‡</sup> Hosannab. The Hebrew word signifies, "Save, we beseech thee;" by their application of the term to Jesus, they meant to say, "May God save and prosper him!"

When the Holy Jesus had thus entered Jerusalem in triumph, he went up to the mount of Olives, and from thence beholding Jerusalem, and foreseeing the dreadful and unparallelled calamities which were to befal it, he wept over it, saying, "O that thou also wouldst yet consider, and lay to heart, before it be too late, even in this critical juncture, those things which concern thy future tranquillity! but now thou shuttest thine eyes against them, and wilt not consider. But thy punishment for this shall be, that shortly thine enemies shall closely besiege \* thee, and famish thee: they shall take thy city, destroy all that are in it, and utterly demolish the temple; and all this shall befal thee for not considering what I have, by way of message, delivered from God to thee." All which literally came to pass, and was verified in the most minute circumstances and particulars.

Jesus descending from the mount of Olives to the city, (which was still but part of his cavalcade) he went into the temple, purifying it from all uncleanness and profanation, and not suffering so much as the least vessel to be carried through or into it which did not appertain to the service of God. Thither also the acclamations of the people followed him, which was no small mortification to the Pharisees, who, with the noises abroad, and the restless tumults of envy and hatred within their own breasts, are ready to burst: and that which adds to their vexation the more is, that notwithstanding all their endeavours to suppress his glories, in despite of all their stratagems, the whole nation was become, as it were, one disciple to the glorious Nazarene. To confirm them in which opinion, he continues to cure the blind and lame, and others of infirmities under which they laboured.

But notwithstanding the Pharisees and other grandees among the Jews were so malevolent to the Holy Jesus, who had done so much good among them; yet there were others of as much consideration, and who were

<sup>\*</sup> Besiege thee. In the Mount of Olives, where Jesus shed tears over perishing Jerusalem, the Romans first pitched their tents, when they came to its final overthrow.

far better disposed: for while Jesus abode at Jerusalem, certain Greeks, \* who came to the feast to worship, made an application to Philip that they might be introduced to Jesus. Philip acquaints Andrew with it; and they both inform Jesus; who, having admitted them, discourses before them of many things relating to his passion; tells them, that his death † would be a means of bringing more to the faith than his life had been, in like manner as a corn of wheat sown in the earth, which by that mean dies, but arises with abundance and increase.

After this, his human nature beginning to dread the approaching hour, he confesses the frailty of it, and would by prayer endeavour to avert the bitter cup; but recollects, it was to suffer that he came into the world, and therefore would not pray against it; but rather desires his Father to finish the grand purpose of glorifying his name. which he was answered by a voice from heaven; "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." But neither this, nor the whole series of miracles that he performed, the mercies, the cures, nor the divine discourses he uttered, produced their genuine effect on the minds of the Jews in general; for many of the rulers among them, though they were convinced that he was the true Messiah, and were disposed to believe on him, yet could not assume sufficient courage to confess him, for, alas! "they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

Then Jesus again exhorted them all to believe on him, that so they might, by the same act, believe on God; that they might approach unto the light, and not abide in darkness; that they might obey the commandments of the Father, whose express charge it was, that Jesus should preach this gospel; and that they might not be condemned at the last day by the word that they had rejected, which

word, to all who observe it, is everlasting life.

<sup>\*</sup> Greeks. See John xii. 20. Matt. xvi. 15. Luke xix. 39. These Greeks were Gentile worshippers, Proselytes of the gate; who being not permitted to celebrate the feast with the Jews, were yet come up to pray in the outward courts of the temple.

<sup>†</sup> Death. See John xii. 24, &c.

After this sermon, Jesus retiring to Bethany, he abode there all night; and on the morrow returning to Jerusalem, on the way being hungry, he perceived at a considerable. distance a single fig-tree, which had a fine shew of leaves upon it, and therefore appeared to be one of the earlier kind. Having come up to the tree, he found nothing but leaves, there was not so much as a bud; from which it appeared, that though it looked so beautiful, it was a barren tree. Now it is to be observed, that our Lord turned out of the way towards this tree, because as yet it was early in the summer, and the time of gathering figs was not yet arrived; so that if this tree had produced any, it might have been expected they would still be growing upon it. Jesus, intending to intimate that the curse of God should ere long wither and destroy the Jewish nation, which he had before compared to an unfruitful figtree, (Luke xiii. 6, 9,) was pleased to say to this tree, "Let no man from henceforth ever eat fruit of thee, nor any fruit hereafter grow upon thee." The fig-tree began immediately to wither; and shortly after, when the disciples passed by the same spot, they were struck with its appearance, saying, "How soon is the fig-tree withered away!"\*

Jesus took this occasion of exhorting them to confidence in the power and fidelity of God, especially when they were conscious that he was secretly moving them to perform a miraculous work; assuring them that they should be enabled, for the confirmation of their

<sup>\*</sup> Withered away. The enemies of revelation have cavilled at the conduct of our Lord on this occasion. Some pretend that he behaved improperly in cursing the fig-tree, for, say they, it is written, The time of figs was not yet; he therefore cursed the tree for not having fruit, though the time for fruit was not yet arrived.

In answer to this, it is not necessary to dwell on the circumstances mentioned by some writers—that the climate of Judea was much warmer than ours, and that a most delicate kind of figs was ripe there as early as April, &c. &c. The true solution of the apparent difficulty is perfectly easy. By the sentence, The time of figs was not yet come, we are to understand that the time of gathering figs was not yet come, and therefore if the tree bore any fruit, the passenger might expect to find it on the tree, which he would not, if the season for gathering the fully ripe fruit had arrived.

mission, to produce greater changes than that which they had just witnessed, even such as the removal of a hill into the sea, if they should be called to perform such a miracle.

Jesus having returned to the city, entered into the temple, and preached the gospel; whereupon the Scribes and Elders, knowing he had no authority from the Sanhedrim, questioned his commission, asking him, who gave him authority to do these things? This question Jesus thought fit to answer by asking another, which he knew would silence them: and therefore he desired to know their opinion of John, whether he derived his commission from God or from man? The Jews soon perceived that they were ensuared in their own net, being unable to make any reply: for they considered, that if they should say John received his power of men, they would be in danger of being stoned by the multitude, who esteemed John as a prophet: and if they should say from heaven,\* they well knew he might justly reproach them for not believing him. Unable, then, to extricate themselves out of this difficult dilemma, they concluded ignorance to be the best answer, and declared they could not tell whence he derived his power. To which the holy Jesus replies; "Neither is it necessary for me to give you any account of my commission or authority, since you grant, that a man may lawfully preach and baptize, and receive disciples, as John did, without the approbation or permission of the Sanhe-Is it not a strange thing, that you who pretend so much to be God's informed and obedient servants, should yet stand out, the most obstinately of all others, against his commands, and the messengers sent from him, when the meanest publicans and the multitude forsake their former ways, repent, and believe the gospel?" Then he proceeded to reprove the Pharisees and rulers by the parable of two sons; the first of whom, bluntly said to his father, when he ordered him to go and work in the vineyard, "I will not;" but being soon sensible of his disobedience, repented, and obeyed his commands. The se-

<sup>\*</sup> Heaven. See Matt. xxi. 25, &c. Luke xx. 6, &c.

cond gave his father good words, promising obedience, but not performing. Jesus asking the Jews, which of these they thought the most dutiful son? They answer, The first. Then, immediately applying the parable to them, he observed, That the publicans and harlots, the worst of sinners in their opinion, by receiving the gospel, which they rejected, should enter heaven before them: meaning by this parable, that persons who appeared the most unlikely, were more readily converted than they, whose religion was altogether external, who were proud of their own righteousness, and whose whole lives were a se-

ries of hypocrisy and disobedience.

To this he added the parable of the vineyard, "which the owner let out to husbandmen, who killed the servants sent to demand the fruits, and at last the Son also, that they might seize the inheritance. And asking the Pharisees, what they thought the owner would do to those husbandmen? They expressed great indignation against those false and bloody servants, affirming them worthy of utter destruction; that the Lord of the vineyard might provide him better officers, which should pay him his rent duly." Though when Jesus, upon this answer of theirs, approved\* the reasonableness of it, and affirmed it should thus befal them indeed, (by which they began to perceive that he spake this parable against them) they with indignation deprecate the sentence, saying, "God† forbid." Then pronouncing a sad woe against all such as should stumble at him the rejected, though chief or corner stone, or on whom this stone should fall; he positively declares to the Jews, that the gospel, and the privilege of being the only church and people of God, should be taken from them, and given to such as shall readily and cordially receive his gospel.

After these, and some other reprehensions, which he so veiled in parable, that it might not be expounded to be calumny, (although such sharp sermons had been spoken

<sup>\*</sup> Approved. See Luke xx. 19. Matt. xxi. 45.

<sup>+</sup> God. See Luke xx. 16.

in the people's hearing; but yet so clearly that themselves might see their own iniquity in those modest and just representations) the Pharisees would fain have seized him; but they durst not for fear of the people: therefore they resolved, if they could, to entangle\* him in his talk, and accordingly sent out spies, who should pretend sanctity and veneration for his person; who, with a goodly insinuating preface, that Jesus was impartial in his thoughts and words, regarded no man's person, but spake the word of God with much simplicity and justice, would seem to colour their mischievous designs against him. The spies they sent were of two contrary parties, some Pharisees, others Herodians;† that whatsoever answer he should make to any of their questions, one party might be offended with him.

They come to him therefore with this flattering, but insidious prologue; we know, that without all fear of men or partiality, thou wilt tell us truly what is our duty toward God: tell us therefore, is it just, according to the law of God, to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?" Jesus knowing their treacherous design, said; "Ye hypocrites, why endeavour ye, under the pretence of reverencing me, to ensuare me? Shew me the tribute-money." And

<sup>\*</sup> Entangle. See Matt. xxii. 15, &c.

<sup>†</sup> Herodians. The Herodians were not a distinct sect from the Pharisees and Sadducees; but some of them Sadducees, as appears by comparing Matt. xvi. 16, with Mark viii. 15.

<sup>‡</sup> God. Matt. xxii. 16, &c.

It is the frequency of the question about the tribute was the cause of a great dispute, because of the numerous sect of the Galileans, who denied it, and because of the affections of the people, who loved their money and their liberty, and the privileges of their nation. The head of this sect of the Galileans was one Judas Gaulonita or Galilaus, according to Josephus, Hist. l. 18, c. 2, who being joined by one Saddok, a priest, solicited the people to a defection, telling them that God was to be their only master and prince, and no mortal to be acknowledged as such; that the requiring a tax from them, if they should pay it, was a manifest profession of servitude, and that it was their duty to vindicate their liberty: by which means he raised a great sedition among the Jews, and was the cause, un-

they brought him a penny. Then he demands of them, whose image was inscribed\* upon it? They confess it to be the signature of the Roman emperor: whence Christ concluded, that they which acknowledge Cæsar's supremacy over them, ought to pay the tribute due to him as supreme; for the law of God, requiring that every one should possess that which belongs to him, he particularizes the duties of paying acknowledgment to kings in their just dues, as acts of piety are due to God. was a great disappointment to them, who thought, that, upon answering this question, he would unavoidable incur the displeasure of Cæsar, or of the people; but finding that by his incomparable wisdom he had broken their snare,† they departed, admiringt his prudence, and despairing of being able to gain any advantage over him. But though they were disappointed in their crafty stratagem, yet from thence this general good accrued to mankind, that our blessed Saviour, by means of their intended treachery, established a rule of the utmost importance, and of perpetual obligation, saying, "Give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

The blessed Jesus having so excellently, and so much to their admiration answered the Pharisees, the Sadducees bring their objection to him against the resurrection, by proposing the case of a woman successively

der pretence of defending the public liberty, of innumerable mischiefs to the nation.

<sup>\*</sup> Inscribed. This plainly denoted their right of submission, and consequently of paying tribute to the Romans: for the coining of money is part of the supreme power or regal prerogative; and they being a conquered people, and their coin bearing Cæsar's inscription, the tribute must be supposed due to him.

<sup>†</sup> Snare. The notion entertained by the bulk of the Jews was, that the Messiah would deliver them from foreign servitude. If therefore he who called himself the Messiah, recommended paying taxes to the Romans, they would consider it as inconsistent with his pretensions, nay, a renouncing them altogether.

<sup>‡</sup> Admiring. See Matt. xxii. 22.

<sup>§</sup> Resurrection. See Mark xii. 19, &c.

married to seven husbands, and requiring whose wife should she be in the resurrection; for they weakly concluded that future state of things to be impossible, which would be liable to so great an absurdity as that a woman should be at once the wife of seven men. But Jesus first answered their objection, by telling them, that all those relations, whose foundation is laid in the imperfections, and passions of flesh and blood, shall cease in that state; which is so spiritual, that it resembles the condition of angels, among whom there is no difference of sex, no genealogies or derivations from one to another: and then, by a new argument, he proves the resurrection by one of God's condescending titles, for he had frequently called himself the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For since God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, unto him even these men are alive: and if so, then either they now exercise acts of life, and therefore shall be restored to their bodies, that their actions may be complete, and they remain not in a state of imperfection to all eternity; or if they be alive, and yet cease from among men, they shall be much rather raised to a condition which shall actuate and make perfect their present capacities and dispositions, lest a power and inclination should for ever be in the root, and never grow up to fruit or perfection, and thus discredit the works of God as an eternal vanity.

Though the Pharisees and Sadducees were no great friends to one another; yet in the cause against the Saviour of the world they united their forces: but notwithstanding this partial union, they were glad upon any occasion to see each other foiled. Of which an instance occurred, when the Sadducees proposed the question relating to the resurrection; for the Pharisees were well pleased, not that Jesus spake so excellently, but that the Sadducees were confuted; and therefore hoping for better success, they attack him with another question, more out of curiosity, than any pious desire of satisfaction. But at last, after all their disputes, Jesus was pleased to ask them a question concerning CHRIST, whose Son he was? they answered, "The Son of David." But he, in reply, proposed another question? "How then doth David call him

Lord?" saying, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, &c." To which they could give no answer.

After this, Jesus gave his disciples a solemn caution against the pride, hypocrisy, and oppression of the Scribes and Pharisees; and commended the poor widow's oblation of her two mites into the treasury, preferring her pious intentions, who threw in her all, before the great and mighty superfluities of the rich, who had still so much to spare. All this was spoken in the temple; the goodly stones\* and ornaments of which when the apostles beheld with wonder, they being so firm and beautiful, Jesus at the same time prophesies the destruction of that holy place. Concerning which prediction, when the apostles, being with him at the mount of Olives, asked him privately of the time and signs of such sad events, he tells them one prognostic of that destruction shall be, that many deceivers shall arise, pretending to be the Messiah. Another forerunner of it is, that great commotions and tumults shall take place in Judea, before the Romans come to destroy them utterly. Then he discoursed largely of his coming to judgment against the city of Jerusalem, and from thence interweaved predictions of the universal judgment of the world, of which this, though very awful, was but a small presage; adding precepts of watchfulness, and of due preparation, with hearts filled with grace: all which he enforced with the pathetic parable of the "Ten Virgins, who, at that point of time spoken of, the heavy visitation of this people, took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were prudent and

<sup>\*</sup> Stones. Josephus says that some of them were forty-five cubits long, five high, and six broad; that is, in English measure, sixty-seven feet long, seven and a half high, and nine broad. Tacitus also speaks of the immense opulence of the temple at Jerusalem. (Hist. lib. v.)

Josephus likewise asserts, that the marble of the temple was so white, that it appeared to a spectator at a distance, like a mountain of snow; and the gilding of its several external parts, which he also mentions, must, when the sun shone upon it, have rendered it a most splendid and beautiful spectacle. See Josephus Bell. Jud. lib. v. c. 5, &c.

<sup>†</sup> Destruction. See Matt. xxiv. 3. Mark xiii. 3. Luke xxi. 7.

watchful; the other vain and improvident. The five wise had provided themselves with a stock of oil sufficient to furnish their lamps during their expectation of the bridegroom's coming; but the five foolish took no more with them than for their present occasion. After long waiting, heavy sleep sealed their weary eyes; but at midnight they are alarmed with the cry of the bridegroom's coming-The five wise, who had trimmed their lamps before they went to rest, are not surprised with the sudden summons, but joyfully prepare to meet the bridegroom; while the five foolish and careless virgins, roused at the noise, find their lamps extinct. In vain they implore a supply of the others; they are forced to seek for more oil elsewhere; in which time the bridegroom arrives, who receives the five wise, and takes them with him to the place of the nuptial entertainment, and orders the door to be shut. The five foolish damsels having long loitered about for oil to recruit their exhausted lamps, come to the bridegroom's gate, demanding entrance with as much assurance as those that had paid the most strict attendance. Their importunate cries reach the bridegroom's ear, who tells them there was no room for such loiterers, whose sloth and improvidence had betrayed them to the loss of any entertainment with him." By this parable, the blessed Jesus hinted to his disciples the necessity of watchfulness, that not knowing the day or hour of the Son of man's coming, they might be always ready to receive him.\*

<sup>\*</sup> Him. The excellent Doddridge expresses the general use which Christians should make of this parable in the following manner:

Let us apply our hearts to the obvious instructions which this well-known parable so naturally suggests. We are under a religious profession: our lamps are in our hands; and we go forth as those that expect to meet Christ; as those that desire and hope to be admitted to the marriage supper of the Lamb. But, alas, how few are there, that are truly prepared for such a blessedness! Would to God there were reason to hope that the Christian church were so equally divided, that five of ten in it had the oil of Divine grace in their hearts, to render them "burning and shining lights!"

Let even such as have it, be upon their guard; for our Lord intimates, that the wise, as well as the foolish virgins, are too apt to slumber and sleep, and careless-Iy to intermit that watch which they ought constantly to maintain. There may be,

This parable of diligence and watchfulness he enforces with another of the talents entrusted with the faithful and slothful servants, thereby pressing the observance those duties more earnestly to them. And then for the encouragement of the diligent, and terror of the slothful, he proceeds to tell them, that when Christ shall come to judgment, whether to execute judgment on this people, or to doom every man for his future and eternal existence, then shall his appearance be glorious and full of majesty. All the people of the Jews, believers and unbelievers, and all that ever lived in this world, every one with whom God had entrusted any talent, shall by the angels be gathered before him: and all his obedient followers and disciples shall be placed in a state of the greatest dignity; but the unfaithful and disobedient shall be liable to judgment. Then shall he, as king and judge, distribute the joys and comforts of the kingdom of heaven, which before all eternity were designed to be the portion of all the faithful servants of God, according to the evidence of true faith expressed by every man's works of piety and charity performed in this life, particularized \* in St. Matthew's gospel, by feeding and entertaining Christ, by clothing his naked body, attending him when he was sick, relieving, assisting, providing for, and visiting him in restraint. Then shall his humble and faithful disciples, as not conscious of any such acts of service or charity shewed to Christ, decline the

at an unexpected time, a midnight cry. Happy the souls that can hear it with pleasure; being not only habitually, but actually ready to obey the summons! Happy they, that have their loins girded, and their lamps burning! Luke xii. 35.

The foolish virgins saw their error too late: they applied to the wise; but their application was vain. And as vain will the hope of those be who trust to the intercession of departed saints, or any supposed redundancy of merit in them, while they are themselves strangers to a holy temper and life. In vain will they cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us. The door of mercy will be shut for ever, and the workers of iniquity utterly disowned." The day of grace has its limits; and for those that have trifled it away, there remaineth nothing "but the blackness of darkness for ever." Jude, v. 13.

<sup>\*</sup> Particularized. See Matt. xxv. 35, 36, &c.

praise of such actions. To which the Blessed Jesus will reply, " Inasmuch as they had performed those good offices to the least of all his genuine disciples, and from a principle of love to him, he considered it as done to him-But as to the slothful and unfaithful, he shall pronounce them accursed, and adjudge them to those eternal woes, designed for the devil, and those angels that sinned and fell with him, for the want of that true faith which always worketh by love, and which radical defect was awfully evinced by their uncharitableness, in refusing to assist him when he was famished with hunger, starved with cold, sick, and in prison. And when, as not conscious of this cruelty and impiety, they shall begin to expostulate that they never acted in this unfriendly manner to Christ never saw him in any distress without relieving him: then shall he answer them; "Inasmuch as ye did not succour and comfort the meanest of my disciples, ye refused those good offices to my person. He then concludes his sermon with a prediction of his approaching passion, foretelling, that within two days\* he should be betrayed and delivered by the Jews into the hands of the Romans, to die after their manner, which was to be fastened to a cross.

The Jews, who had long and impatiently waited for an opportunity of destroying Jesus by the formalities of law, had hitherto been frustrated in all their attempts, though laid with all the insidious treachery that malice could invent; for they durst not attack him by open force, because of the great opinion the multitude entertained of him, and who might revenge any harm done to him upon the administration: however, they resolve to leave no means untried to get him into their power, and in order hereunto they call a great council to consult how to ensnare him: but while the Scribes and Pharisees were anxiously contriving how to betray him, a wicked officious man, at the instigation of the devil, furnishes them with an instrument: Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, hearing of this meeting of the Jews, and knowing that they of the Sanhedrin were desirous of apprehending Jesus privately, goes from Beth-

<sup>\*</sup> Two days. See Matt. xxvi. 2.

any in haste, and offered to betray his master to them, if they would give him a considerable reward. The council overjoyed at this opportunity, were as ready to offer as his avarice was to crave, and they agreed with him for thirty pieces of silver. A poor price for the Saviour of the world to be valued at by his undiscerning, unworthy countrymen. The bargain thus made, Judas retires from the council, watching an opportunity \* such as they desired; that is, an opportunity of taking him privately, when the people should not be aware.

The next day † was the first day of unleavened bread, on which it was necessary they should kill ‡ the passover; therefore Jesus sent Peter and John to the city to a certain man, whom they should find carrying a pitcher § of water to his house, || him they were to follow, and there to prepare the passover. These two disciples went, and accordingly found the man in the same circumstances, and prepared for Jesus and his family, who at the evening came to

celebrate the passover.

All things being provided, and the time appointed drawing near, the Holy Jesus, who was now about to finish the great work of redemption, came with his apostles to Jerusalem, there to eat the passover with them before his passion. Having eaten the paschal lamb with his disciples, and knowing that his hour\*\* was come that he should depart out of this world to the Father, and therefore that what he had to say or do to his disciples must be done presently, he thus expressed the constancy of his af-

<sup>\*</sup> Opportunity. See Matt. xxvi. 4, 16.

Next Day. The Thursday evening, wherein the thirteenth day of the month Nisan was concluded, and the fourteenth day began, the day of preparation to the feast of unleavened bread, whereon they put all leaven out of their houses, that is, on the evening which began the paschal-day.

<sup>‡</sup> Kill. See Luke xxii. 7.

<sup>§</sup> Pitcher. See Mark xiv. 73, &c.

<sup>#</sup> House. This is supposed to be the house of John surnamed Mark, which had always been open to this blessed family, where Jesus was pleased to finish his last supper, and the mysteriousness of the vespers of his passion.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Hour. See John xiii. 1, &c.

rection to them. Rising from supper, after the manner of a servant, he puts off his upper garment, girds his under garment with a napkin, and pouring water into a bason, puts himself in the humble posture of the meanest attendant to wash his disciples' feet, and afterwards wipes them with the napkin; intending, by this condescending action, accompanied with an admirable discourse, to teach them humility, and kindness to each other. But Simon Peter, thinking he ought in good manners to decline this act of condescension, which he thought beneath the dignity of his master, was unwilling to be washed by him, till Jesus assured him, he must renounce his part in him, unless he were washed. Upon which he cried out, "Lord, not only my feet, but my hands and my head." Jesus tells him, he that is washed\* before, needs no further washing, save only for the feet, which by daily conversing and walking on earth, will be apt to contract defilement, and need continual cleansing.

After the eating of the paschal lamb, the blessed Jesus knowing that his time was short, and that he had much to do in it, hastens to the second supper,† at which he in-

<sup>\*</sup> Washed. That is, He that has been bathing—as the room in which persons dressed themselves was different from that in which they bathed, their feet might be so soiled in walking from the one to the other, as to make it necessary immediately to wash them again. Thus, though true believers in Christ are already clean, being washed from their sins in his blood, yet is it necessary, even for them, daily to renew their application to him, that they may be freed from those pollutions which they are daily contracting in their walk through this defiled and defiling world.

Some Christians have imagined that our Lord intended by washing his disciples' feet, to establish a continued rite in his church, and some still retain it as such. But as no such rite ever obtained generally in the christian world, and as it would be, in some countries and circumstances, an inconvenience, rather than a kindness, to do it for our friends, it is very properly considered by Christians in general, as an example of humility and attention to our brethren, to be imitated not in the letter, but in the spirit of it.

<sup>†</sup> Second Supper. It was the custom of the Jewish nation after the eating of the paschal lamb to sit down to a second supper, in which they ate herbs and unleavened bread, the Major-Domo first dipping his morsel, and then the family; after which the father of the family brake bread into pieces, and distributed a

tended to institute the perpetual memorial of that great sacrifice, which he was about to offer up for the sin of the world. Jesus therefore, took bread, and gave thanks, and blessed it; that is, having implored the divine blessing on it, and on the ordinance he then instituted, that it might in all succeeding ages tend to the edification of his people, he brake the bread into several pieces, and gave some of it to each of his disciples present, and said, "Take this bread, and eat it with reverence and thankfulness; for this is my body;"\* that is, it is the sensible sign and representation of my body, which is freely given, and is speedily to be broken, bruised, wounded, and even slaughtered for you. Do this hereafter in your assemblies for religious worship in a pious and affectionate remembrance† of me, that you may keep

part to every guest, and first drinking himself, gave to the rest the chalice filled with wine according to the age and dignity of the person, adding to each distribution a form of benediction proper to the mystery, which was eucharistical and commemorative of their deliverance from Egypt. See Job xiii. 2.

Dr. Doddridge thus explains this circumstance. "As it is here asserted that Christrose from supper, we must allow, that, in some sense, supper was begun; that is, I suppose, the antepast had been taken, which is mentioned by the Jews, as preceding the paschal lamb. They tell us, that it was then usual for the master of the family to wash his hands; and if I am rightly informed, the Jews continue the custom still. This seems a more natural manner of explaining the matter, than to suppose (according to the note above) that after the paschal lamb they are another distinct supper; and that this washing happened in the interval between them."

\* My Body. On the same foundation on which the Papists argue for transubstantiation from these words, they might prove from Ezek. v. 1. 5, that the prophet's bair was the city of Jerusalem; from John x. 9, and xv. 1, that Christ was literally a door, and a wine, and from 1 Cor. xi. 25, that the cup was his blood, and that Christ commanded his disciples to drink and swallow the cup. It is remarkable that a church which claims infallibility, should be given up to a kind of infatuation, in maintaining one of the grossest errors imaginable; and it seems to be allowed by Providence as an antidote against the rest of its poison.

† Remembrance of me. From our Lord's words, "This do in remembrance of me," and from those in 1 Cor. xi. 26, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (natappeare, ye preach, ye declare the Lord's death; ye assure the world of the truth of it,) it appears

up the memory of my dying love, may openly profess your dependance on my death, and impress your hearts

with a becoming sense of it.

And in like manner, he took the cup, and when he had given thanks to his heavenly Father, and implored his blessing upon it as a sacramental sign, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink ye all, of it," and accordingly they all drank some of it. For, said he to them, as he delivered it into their hands, "This cup of wine is a representation of my blood, which is the great basis, a seal of the new dispensation of religion, which is to supersede that of Moses, and which is shed for you, and for myriads more, as the great ransom to be paid for the remission of sins.\*

Our Blessed Lord having instituted that sacred memorial, which the apostles and the church in all succeeding ages were to continue, tells them that he should not long

that the sacrament of the supper was instituted, not only to bring Christ's sufferings and the happy consequences of them, to the remembrance of his disciples, but to demonstrate the truth of these things to the world in all ages. In this view the sacrament of the supper is the strongest proof of our Lord's integrity, and of the truth of his mission: for if he had been an impostor, and was to have suffered death on account of his deluding the people, is it to be imagined that he would have instituted any rite with a view to preserve the memory of his having suffered punishment for the worst of crimes? No; this is beyond all human belief. And, therefore, since by this institution he has perpetuated the memory of his own sufferings, it affords a strong presumption that he was conscious of his own innocence, that his character was really what the evangelists have represented it to be, and that our faith in him, as the Son of God, is well-founded. This is the judicious remark of Dr. Macknight in his Harmony of the Gospels, sect. 129.

\* Sins. This ordinance, as Dr. Doddridge observes, has so plain a reference to the atonement or satisfaction of Christ, and pays so solemn an honour to that fundamental doctrine of the gospel, that while this sacred institution continues in the church, it will be impossible to root that doctrine out of the minds of plain humble Christians, by all the arts of criticism. Honest simplicity will always see the analogy this ordinance has to eating the flesh of the Son of God, and drinking his blood; and will be taught by it to feed on him as the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. The enemies of this heart-reviving truth might as well hope to pierce through a coat of mail with a straw, as to reach such a truth, defended by such an ordinance as this, by any of their trifling sophistries.

continue with them; that this would be the last passover he should celebrate with them till they should feast with him in the kingdom of heaven; and at last, labouring under great agitation of mind, he informed his apostles that one of them would betray\* him. This was a very surprising arrest upon the reputation of each disciple, except the guilty one; every one but he looking upon himself as innocent, yet liable to the imputation of guilt under so general an accusation. The apostles, with great perplexity of mind, survey each other, but cannot guess at the guilty person; Judas the traitor being the furthest from their suspicion, because he was the Lord's steward, and entrusted by him with the disposal of that little temporal property possessed by the holy family. While they were labouring under this anxiety, Simon Peter thought of a method to come at the truth of this matter; and that was by hinting to John, the favourite apostle, who then sat next to Jesus, that he would prevail upon him to discover the guilty person, that the rest might not labour under the suspicion of such infamous treachery. John being so near Jesus, could ask him unperceived by the rest, whom he meant. He told him, it was he to whom he should give the next piece of bread, which he took out of the dish; and having given him that mark whereby to distinguish him, he presently puts his hand into the dish, and takes a piece of bread, and gives it to Judas.† And notwithstanding Jesus had warnedt him before of the horrid danger of the sin, telling him, it had been better for that man that he were sunk to the bottom of the sea, than be guilty of

<sup>\*</sup> Betray. See John xiii. 2. Jesus made this prediction, that they might not be scandalized at the sadness of his passion, but be confirmed in their belief, seeing a great demonstration of his wisdom and spirit of prophecy, in this very instance of foretelling the treachery of Judas Iscariot.

<sup>†</sup> Judas. The Jews in eating the passover used a thick kind of sauce called Haroseth, made of palm-tree branches, or of raisins, &c. which they mixed with vinegar and other seasoning, to represent the clay whereof their fathers in Egypt made brick. Into this sauce, it is probable that Jesus dipped a morsel of the mean he was eating, and gave it to Judas.

<sup>†</sup> Warned. See Mark xiv. 21. John xiii. 27.

such treacherous ingratitude, yet by his not relenting, the devil entered more forcibly into him than before, \* hurrying him to a speedy execution of his wicked designs; which Jesus knowing, said to him accordingly, "What thou dost, do quickly." Now, none of the rest that were at supper, understood the meaning of this, unless perhaps John, to whom he had given the token; † they apprehending, that because he was almoner, Jesus had ordered him to distribute something to the poor. However, he had no sooner received the sop, but the devil immediately, took possession of him; and taking the advantage of the night, the better to conceal his villainous designs, he withdraws from his master and joins his enemies; who having bargained with him for a certain price, to betray him, impatiently expected a performance of his promise; which they were not long disappointed of; for Jesus never after saw him as a disciple, but as a traitor, when he came with an armed force to seize him in the garden; which was shortly after.

While these things passed, the old topic of supremacy is again revived; which Jesus suppresses, as he had done before, to prevent any misunderstandings among them, which are too apt to be the consequences of emulation; promising them a kingdom, upon the same terms that his Father had promised him one; adding, that they should be next to him, and at his departure have

the government of the church.

Then Jesus began his farewel sermon, which was mixed with sorrow and joy, and interwoven with mysteries, as with rich jewels—the discourses of the glorification of

<sup>\*</sup> Before. See John xiii. 2. Luke xxii. 3.

<sup>†</sup> Token. Ibid. v. 26. † Night. Ibid. v. 30.

<sup>§</sup> Disciple. Luke xxii. 47. Judas is called, "He that was called Judas, one of the twelve."

<sup>||</sup> Supremacy. Some time before this, viz. before his departing from Jericho, Matt. xx. 25, 29, may, before he came hither, Mark x. 42, 46, there had been a contention among the disciples (occasioned by the request of Zebedee's wife for her two sons, Matt. xx. 20,) which of them should be looked upon as the worthiest, and so be preferred before the rest.

God in his Son, and of those glories which the Father had prepared for him; he also mentions his sudden departure, and his going to a place whither they could not follow him yet, but afterwards should; meaning first to death, and then to glory; commanding them to love one another.

About this time, Christ addressed himself particularly to Peter, saying, "I tell thee, Simon, that upon the occasion of some sin committed by thee, Satan has accused thee before God, and desired that he may have the shaking of thee, to drive thee from the faith of Christ: this is granted him, and the danger consequent upon it is great; but I have prayed for thee that thou mayest not be conquered by him and his terrors, so as utterly to forsake the faith; and for the sins thou shalt be guilty of in this combat, let this use be made of them: when by repentance thou art recovered out of them, be more careful to strengthen and confirm others, that they fall not in the like manner." Peter, who thought himself endued with strength of faith sufficient to resist any temptation, and sustain any trial however great, confidently protests his readiness to suffer the worst, even death itself with his master. But the blessed Jesus, who knew his weakness, foretels his denying him before the second crowing \* of the cock that night. Then foretelling the imminent dangers that threatened them, he admonishes them to provide spiritual armour against them. "Formerly," says he, "I sent you out without any provision, and ye wanted nothing; but now distresses are like to come upon you, and ye will first see them fall most sharply on me."

But lest he should afflict them with too sad a representation of his present condition, he relieves their drooping spirits with the comforts of faith; tells them their faith † in him would afford them effectual consolation and support under the troubles of the present world; cheers them with the object of his removal to heaven,

<sup>\*</sup> Crowing. See Matt. xxvi. 34. Luke xxii. 34.

<sup>+</sup> Faith. See John xiv. 1, 2, &c.

where he was to become their harbinger, which office he would in all parts execute, by returning again to receive them, and to introduce them to mansions of eternal bliss in his Father's house. And to confirm their faith the more, he tells them; "You know the place to which I go, and the way which will bring you thither; I am the true and living way, sent by my Father to direct all men, and to reveal his will to you, who have known him, as he is revealed in me. Though ye have never seen my Father, yet having seen and known me, who am his image, ye have both seen and known him." Here Philip, not considering in what sense his master spake, saith to him, "Lord shew us the Father, and that will convince us beyond any other argument." Jesus answers, " I tell thee again, Philip, I am the image of my Father, and he that hath seen me, and heard my doctrine, hath seen my Father; why then this unnecessary question? Do you not believe that whatsoever I do or teach, I do by my Father's appointment? Take my word for it; or if you will not do so, let my miracles, which have been wrought before your eyes, convince you; and be assured, that you who have been my disciples, shall be able to do the same miracles \* that I do, nay greater, upon my sending down the Holy Ghost upon you." Then adding a promise, in. order to their present support and future felicity, he assures them, that if they should ask of God any thing in his name, they should receive it; and that he would pray to his Father to send the Holy Ghost to them, to supply his place, to furnish them with proportionable comforts; to qualify them with great gifts; to lead them into all truth; and to abide with them for ever.

As he was going on the way the continued his sermon,

<sup>\*</sup> Miracles. See John xiv. 12.

<sup>†</sup> On the way. The author supposes that this discourse was delivered by our Lord while walking to the garden; but it is not at all probable that so solemn and important an address should be given to eleven persons, while walking through the streets of Jerusalem. It is far more likely that after our Lord had said, "Arise, let us go hence," some circumstance might occasion a delay, which our Lord improved by uttering this admirable sermon and prayer.

exhorting them to perseverance in the faith, and to mutual love. "I am," says he, "the true, generous, fruitbearing-vine, and my Father is the husbandman, who has planted this vine, and by whom it is cultivated for his service. And every branch that is in me by an external profession, but vet is found to be barren, he cutteth off; but every member that is fruitful he pruneth, and maketh more fruitful. You are already sanctified by the operation of my doctrine and Spirit upon you; though you may need further pruning to render you more fruitful. Continue therefore in me, by the exercise of faith and love, and I will train you, to nourish and supply you as from a living root; for as, in the natural world, the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but must presently wither, unless it continue united with the vine, so neither can you produce the fruits of acceptable obedience, unless you continue in me. As long as ye continue obedient to me and my doctrine, all your prayers shall be heard; which will bring glory to my Father, and give you a true title to my discipleship. I have very much enlarged upon these things to you, that the comfort you have taken in my presence, may in my absence continue with you, and that by the addition of that comfort of the Spirit, who will visit you when I am gone, your joy may abound. I charge you to imitate my love to you in mutually leving one another; a great instance of which I shall shortly give you in laying down my life for you. I have given you the greatest demonstrations of my love and friendship; for I have treated you as friends, far above the condition of servants, who use not to know their master's intentions or counsels, but only to do his commands; but I have received you as friends and comfidants into my bosom, and make known all my Father's will to you. If ye shall meet with infidelity and persecutions, let this give you no discouragement, but arm vourselves against it with this consideration, that they thus treated me before you. The hatred of the world to you will be a comfortable symptom, that you are a peculiar people of mine, dignified above and distinguished from the rest of mankind. You must not think it strange to be thus abused by the world; for if they persecuted

me your Lord, you must expect no better, and all that you shall suffer must be imputed to their not believing that God hath sent me. If I had not personally appeared and done these things among them, they might have pleaded ignorance for their excuse, but now they are utterly inexcusable; for I have said and done so much to evidence my mission, that the opposing me is a malicious resisting of my Father himself. By this they have fulfilled that of the Psalmist, They hated me without a cause. But when the Holy Ghost, the advocate of my cause shall come, and whom I will send from the Father, he shall maintain my cause against all opposers, and shall constitute you witnesses of me to all, being the fittest to testify of me, because ye have been always with me. All that I have hitherto said is to fortify you, that you should not be deterred from my service by the hazards that attend it. Ye shall be ill used, and excluded from the synagogues; and they that treat you thus will think it an acceptable service to God, if they put you to death; the cause of all which is the great impiety of their hearts, neither approving the commands of my Father, nor those which I bring from him. I thought it not fit to tell you these things till I was about to leave you, because while I was here, all the malice of men was levelled against me, while you were suffered to escape: but when I am gone from you, and you take the grand employment upon yourselves of revealing my Father's will, the opposition will fall upon you. I know that the thoughts of my leaving you, fill your minds with anxiety; but let this comfort you, the Holy Ghost is not to come till I have left you, and his coming will be of more advantage to you than my continuing with you; and when he cometh, he will plead my cause against the world, and charge the Jews with three sorts of actions practised in their courts. 1. With the crime of not believing me to be the Messiah. 2. He will justify my mission and innocence, by my ascension to heaven, taking me away out of the reach of human malice. 3 He shall work revenge upon Satan and his instruments who crucified me, and retaliate destruction upon them. Besides all that I have said, I have many things more to communicate to you, but ye cannot bear

them now. However, when the Holy Ghost cometh, whose title is the Spirit \* of Truth, he will instruct you what is to be done. What he doth shall tend to the illustration of me: for he being sent from my Father by me, shall in all things accord with me, and thereby appear to have his message from me, and to declare nothing to you, but what he hath from me. But while I say this, I mean not to appropriate to myself, so as to exclude my Father, but because all things are common to me and my Father, and that it is my work wholly to attend my Father's will, therefore whatsoever of this nature the Holy Ghost shall reveal to you, I call that mine, and the revealing of this, his taking of mine and declaring it to you. shall shortly be taken from you for a time, and soon after I shall be with you again before my ascension, for it is not possible for me to be held by death; I must arise and go

to my Father."

This latter part of his discourse his disciples could not comprehend: Jesus therefore, to remove the difficulty, explains it, by saying, "You shall have a time of mourning, and the world of joy; but your sadness shall soon be turned to rejoicing, and their's ere long into heaviness. Your sorrow at my death shall be like the pangs of a woman in travail; but when it shall appear to you, that my death doth but usher in my resurrection and ascension, as the pangs of travail do the birth of a child, then your sorrow shall vanish at the presence of this joy, which shall be lasting. When that Spirit is come, he shall teach you all things, satisfy all your doubts and ignorances, that you shall not need ask me any more ques-After my departure you shall use a new form in your prayers to God, which hitherto you have not used, make your requests to him in my name; and upon the account of your being my disciples, and my giving you this authority, and whatsoever tends to the fulfilling of your joy, or to your real good shall be granted you. My discourses among you have hitherto been obscure; but the Holy Ghost shall set all things plainly before you. And one great advantage you will gain by my ascension

<sup>\*</sup> Spirit. See John xvi. 13.

and the descent of the Spirit, that you shall not need my offering up your prayers for you, but you may in my name offer them up to God yourselves; and God, out of his love and regard to those that believe on me, shall grant all that you ask. I came from the Father into the world; and now I leave the world and go to my Father." This was such a plain demonstration of all that he had spoken, that the disciples scruple no more; their understandings are enlightened; and they no longer question Christ or his mission, "Now," say they, "we perceive that as thou knowest all things, so thou art pleased to reveal all saving truth evidently to us of thine own accord; this convinces us that God sent thee, and that thou camest to reveal his will." Jesus perceiving their forwardness, and knowing the frailty of their nature, tells them; "You speak a little confidently now of your belief, while you are at a distance from danger: but the time is just at hand, when ye shall all desert me; and though ye believe on me, ye will not then confess me, but leave me alone. But though you shall all forsake me, my Father will not; for he will continue with me, will acknowledge me in death itself, and raise me up from the grave. This I have foretold you, that you may depend on me for all kind of prosperity, by considering my conquest over all that is formidable in the world; therefore you ought not to fear, but take courage, and hold out against all the threats and terrors of the world and the sufferings in it." The Holy Jesus having ended his sermon, offers up a solemn prayer to the Father, that he himself might be glorified; and that those who were given him, might be kept through his name; recommending his apostles, and succeeding Christians, in every future age, to the favourable regards of his Father, and praying for their union on earth, and glory in heaven. After which,\* he sung an hymn† with his disciples; and

<sup>\*</sup> After which. Our author fixes this at the time when our Lord sang a hymn with his disciples, probably because it is said, Mark xiv. 26, "When they had sung an hymn, they went out, &c." but most writers conceive that the hymn was sung immediately after the institution of the Lord's supper.

<sup>†</sup> Hymn. This hymn was part of the great Allelujah, beginning at the 114th

then goes forth with them over the brook Cedron, to the mount of Olives, to a village called Gethsemane, where there was a garden,\* into which he entered to pray with his disciples.

Being in the garden with them, he selects his favourite disciples Peter,† James and John, to be the witnesses of his passion, as they had been of his transfiguration; the rest being left near the entrance of the garden, to watch the approach of Judas and his band. With these three disciples he proceeded further into the garden. Then commenced his unparallelled agony, and he retired from the rest, about the distance of a stone's cast; where he began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy. And saith unto them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch," Matt. xxvi. 34. For it was on this occasion that he sustained those grievous sorrows in his soul, by which, as well as by his dying on the cross, he became a sin-offering, and accomplished the redemp-

Psalm, "When Israel came out of Egypt," and ending at the 118th inclusively. It was the custom of the Jews after supper to sing verses or songs, especially over the paschal lamb; at which time they sang the Psalms abovementioned. And though it is generally thought that this was the hymn which Christ sang with his disciples, yet it is possible, that it was some other hymn more particularly adapted to this institution.

<sup>\*</sup> Garden. It is probable that our Lord sought in this place that retirement which the crowded city could scarcely afford at the passover; and he might also prefer it, lest the people, on the first alarm of his apprehension should rise to rescue him.

Cedron or Kedron was, as its name signifies, a shady valley between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, through which the brook ran, which took its name from the place. The garden itself most probably appertained to one of the country seats situated in the vicinity of the metropolis, belonging to some friend of Jesus, who permitted him and his apostles occasionally to resort thither for privacy.

The word Gethremane signifies the valley of fatness, a name derived, probably, from its favourable situation and excellent soil.

<sup>†</sup> Peter. The kindness of our Saviour to Peter, in selecting him with the other two to follow him on this occasion, deserves particular remark; for it was almost immediately after he had so solemnly declared that in the course of the ensuing night he would thrice deny him.

tion of men. "And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast," Luke xxii. 41. His human nature being now burdened beyond measure, he found it necessary to retire, and pray that if it were possible, or consistent with the salvation of the world, he might be delivered from the sufferings which were then lying on him. that it was not the fear of dying on the cross which made him speak and pray in the manner here related, is evident from this, that to suppose it, would be to degrade our Lord's character infinitely. Make his sufferings as terrible as possible; clothe them with all the aggravating circumstances imaginable; yet if no more is included in them but the pains of death, for Jesus, whose human nature was strengthened far beyond the natural pitch, by its union with the divine, to have shrunk at the prospect of them, would shew a weakness which many of his followers were strangers to, encountering more terrible deaths, without the least emotion: and he kneeled down and prayed, saying, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me," Luke xxii. 42. In the Greek it is, "O that thou wouldest remove this cup from me!" For where is a particle of wishing. Matthew says, he fell on his face, and prayed, saying, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." He first kneeled and prayed, as Luke tells us; then, in the vehemence of his earnestness, he fell on his face, and spake the words recorded by Matthew and Mark. In the mean time, his prayer, though most fervent, was accompanied with due expressions of resignation: for he immediately added, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt," Matt. xxvi. 39. Having thus prayed, he returned to his disciples, and finding them asleep, he said to Peter, "Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour?" Mark xiv. 37. Thou who so lately boastedst of thy courage and constancy in my service, "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation," Mark xiv. 38. In his greatest distresses he never lost his concern for the welfare of his disciples. Nor on those occasions was he chagrined with the offences which they committed through frailty and human weakness: on the contrary, he was always ready to make excuses for them: "The spirit

truly is ready, but the flesh is weak." From the disciples falling asleep while our Lord was away, as well as from his retiring to pray, it would appear, that he spent some time in his addresses. The sorrows of our Lord's soul still continuing, he went and prayed a second time to the same purpose. "He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done," Matt. xxvi. 42. "And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy," Matt. xxvi. 43. returned thus frequently to his disciples, that by reading his distress in his countenance and gesture, they might be witnesses of his passion. Our Lord's pains on this occasion were intense beyond expression; for he went away the third time to pray. And notwithstanding an angel was sent from heaven, who strengthened him, they threw him into an agony: upon which, he prayed more earnestly. Yet the sense of his sufferings increased; for they agitated his whole body to such a degree, that his blood was pressed through the pores of his skin along with his sweat, and fell down in great drops on the ground. "And he left them, and went away again," Matt. xxvi. 44. " And there appeared an angel unto him, from heaven, strengthening him," Luke xxii. 43. "And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat\* was as it were great drops of blood falling down

<sup>\*</sup> His sweat, &c. Some expositors have thought that this expression implies that his drops of sweat were large and clammy like clots of gore; and others have taken it in a metaphorical sense; fancying that as those who weep bitterly are said to weep blood, so they may be said to sweat blood, who sweat excessively, by reason of hard labour, or acute pain. But the greater part of good writers more justly affirm, that our Lord's sweat was really mixed with blood to such a degree, that its colour and consistency was as if it had been wholly blood. For the Greek particle, in the above sentence work (as it were,) does not always denote similitude, but sometimes reality, as John i. 14, as the only begotten of the Father.

Dr. Whitby observes that Aristotle, and Siculus mention bloody sweats as attending some extraordinary agony of mind. Leti, in his life of Pope Sixtus, v. p. 200; Sir John Chardin, in his history of Persia; and Dr. Jackson, in his works, vol. ii. p. 819, all mention instances of this phenomenon. Voltaire also, in his Univers.

to the ground." Luke xxii. 44. Thus Jesus suffered unspeakable sorrows in his soul, as long as the divine wisdomsaw fit. At length he obtained relief, being heard on account of his perfect submission to the will of God. "And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow," Luke xxii. 45. This circumstance shews how much the disciples were affected with their Master's sufferings. The sensations of grief which they felt at the sight of his distress so overpowered them, that they sunk into sleep. "Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest," Matt. xxvi. 45. This sentence may be read interrogatively, "Do ye sleep still, and take your rest? (see Mill on Mark xiv. 41,) behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." "Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me," Matt. xxvi. 46.

While the blessed Jesus, with his disciples, continued in the garden, Judas repaired to the priests with whom he had agreed to betray him, and told them that this was the proper moment for the execution of their enterprise, for it was night. This was the advantage they desired, because they durst not seize him by day for fear of the people. Coming thither with an armed multitude\* and the traitor Judas at their head,† they enter the garden, where they soon found the object of their malice: but the Holy Jesus having by this time joined his disciples, and

Hist. ch. 142 says, "Charles IX. died in his twenty-fifth year. The malady he died of was very extraordinary: the blood gushed out of all his pores. This accident, of which there are some instances, was owing either to excessive fear, to violent passion, or to a warm and melancholy constitution."

<sup>\*</sup> Armed Multitude. This was composed partly of a band of Roman soldiers, procured from the Governor by the Priests; and partly of a company of the Pharisees, Elders, and principal Priests, and their servants, carrying lanterns to shew the way; for, though it was always full-moon at the passover, the sky might probably be clouded, and the place to which they were going shaded with trees.

<sup>+</sup> Head. See Luke xxii. 47.

standing among them, that the guards sent to apprehend him, might not mistake him, Judas had given them the hint, that he whom he should kiss was the person. But Judas might-have spared this part of his treason, for the Divinity of his Muster soon discovered him. However, approaching him with an address of seeming civility, he kissed him. Then Jesus, seeing the soldiers coming towards him, demanded whom they sought? They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth;" upon which, knowing his time was now come, he tells them, "I am he;" thus intimating, that he was willing to put himself into their hands. Then offering, with their profane hands, to seize him, the impetuous rays of glory which issued from his Divine countenance, affected them so powerfully, that they fell to the ground. But these soldiers, true servants of the persecuting Jews, recovering from their fall, and raised by the permission of Jesus, still persisted in their enquiry after him, who was ready and desirous to be sacrificed. But Jesus, as he had done before, begins the enquiry, and informs them that he was Jesus of Nazareth, whom they sought: upon which, one of the most bold and audacious advancing to seize him, Peter, as if ready singly to engage the whole band, drew his sword, and by a desperate blow at the head of Malchus, a servant of the High-Priest, cut off his right ear. But Jesus rebuked the intemperance of his passion, and commanded him to put up his sword,\* saying, "They that strike with the sword shall perish with the sword;" intimating hereby, that we ought to restrain all violent expressions of anger and revenge. And then turning to Malchus, he touched his wounded head as d cured him; adding to the former instance of his power, in casting down to the ground those-

<sup>\*</sup> Sword. There were two swords in Christ's family, and St. Peter bore one: Either because he was to kill the paschal-lamb; or according to the custom of the country, to secure them from beasts of prey, which in those parts were frequent and dangerous in the night. But now St. Peter used it in an unjustifiable manner; for as the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, the defence of it is not of a secular nature. The weapons of the Christian warfare, are not carnal but spiritual; yet rendered invincible by his mighty power.

who came to take him, an act of miraculous mercy, in curing the wound of an enemy inflicted by a friend. But further to convince Peter of the uselessness of human power in his defence, he tells him, "If \* I would toreibly be relieved, I could pray to my Father, who would immediately furnish me with an army of angels. But the prophets have foretold that I must suffer, and their predictions must be accomplished." He therefore permitted himself to be taken, but not his disciples;† for he it was that set them their bounds; and he secured his aposties to be witnesses of his sufferings and glory, after which they were to have their share and fellowship in affliction.

When our Blessed Lord, in humble-resignation to his Father's will, and for the redemption of the world, had yielded himself into the hands of his enemies, his disciples fled; † among whom was a young man, § that had a linen cloth cast about his naked body, whom the soldiers endeavoured to apprehend by laying hold on the linen; but he left it in their hands, and fled || from them naked,

though Peter followed his Master at a distance.

After the soldiers had bound Jesus, they dragged him away to the High-Priest's, but the house of Annas, which stood on mount Sion, being in the way to the house of Caiaphas the High-Priest, he was led thither, as to the first stage of their triumph over him. When the band of soldiers arrived at the High-Priest's with Jesus, they found many of the chief priests, and the Scribes, and the

<sup>\*</sup> If. See Matt. xxvi. 53, &c. + Disciples. See John xviii. 8.

<sup>‡</sup> Fled. See Matt. xxvi. 56. Mark xiv. 50, 51, &c.

<sup>§</sup> Young Man. This is by some supposed to be John the Evangelist, who through grief had forgot to lay aside his upper garment, which in festivals they used to put on, and began to make his escape; but being arrested by this linen garment, he was forced to leave that behind him, that himself might avoid his Master's danger. But it is far more probable that this young man was the proprietor of the garden, who being awakened by the noise, came out of his adjacent apartment with the linen cloth in which he had been lying, and having a friendship for Jesus followed him, forgetting his dress.

<sup>##</sup> Fled. When John had conquered the first emotions of his terror, he returned, and was shortly after in the High-Priest's hall. See John xviii. 16.

elders, assembled there. Some persons of distinction, however, may have been absent, whose coming the rest would wait for. Wherefore, although the soldiers brought Jesus to the High-Priest's shortly after midnight, his trial did not begin till about three in the morning; the intermediate time being spent in procuring witnesses, in sending for the absent members, and in gathering the clerks and officers of the court. For that Jesus was tried by the council, not in the temple as many suppose, but in the High-Priest's palace, is evident from John xviii. 28, where we are told, that they led Jesus from Caiaphas's house to the prætorium.\* "And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people, and the chief priests, and the Scribes, came together, and led him into their council." The court therefore being duly constituted, and the prisoner placed at the bar, the trial began about break of day. † "The High-Priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine:" he asked him who his disciples were, for what end he had gathered them, whether it was to make himself a king; and what the doctrine was which he taught them? In these questions there was a great deal of art. For as the crime laid to our Lord's charge was, that he had set himself up for the Messiah and deluded the people, they expected he would claim that dignity in their presence, and so without farther trouble they would have condemned him on his own confession. But to oblige a prisoner to confess what might take away his life, being an unjust method of procedure, Jesus complained of it with reason, and bade them prove what they laid to his charge by witnesses. t "Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them; behold, they know what I said." It was greatly to the honour of our Lord's character, that all his actions were done in public,

<sup>\*</sup> Prætorium. Luke xxii. 66. † Day. John xviii. 19. ‡ Witnesses. John xviii. 20.

under the eve even of his enemies; because, had he been carrying on any imposture, the lovers of truth and goodness had thus abundant opportunities to have detected him. With propriety, therefore, in this defence, he appealed to that part of his character; nevertheless his answer was thought disrespectful, for, "When he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by, struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the High-priest so?" He meekly replied, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil;" shew wherein it lies: " but if well, why smitest thou me?" Thus Jesus became an example of his own precept, \* bearing the greatest injuries with a patience that could not be provoked. "Now Annas had sent him bound to Caiaphas, the High-Priest." The evangelist mentions that Jesus was sent to the High-Priest, because he had before said, that he was first sent to Annas, the High-Priest's fatherin-law. Moreover, he takes notice that he was sent bound to the High-Priest, to shew the inhumanity of the officer who struck him in that condition. When the council found that Jesus declined answering the questions whereby they would have drawn from him an acknowledgment of his being the Messiah, they examined many witnesses to prove his having assumed that character. For, by what afterwards happened, it appears that they considered such a pretension as blasphemy in his mouth, who being nothing but a man, as they supposed, could not, without affronting the majesty of God, take the title of God's Son, which of right belonged to Messiah. † " Now the chief priests and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death." In examining the witnesses, they acted like interested and enraged persecutors, rather than impartial judges. For they formed their questions after such a manner, as, if possible, to draw from them expressions which they might pervert into suspicions of guilt, upon which they might condemn Jesus. "But they found none. Yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none:"

<sup>\*</sup> Precept. Matt. v. 44.

notwithstanding they were at the utmost pains to procure such a proof as in the eye of the law would justify the sentence they were resolved to pass upon Jesus, they exerted themselves to no purpose. Because, though they suborned many witnesses, these, in giving their testimony, contradicted one another; a circumstance which the most illiterate person in the court could not but be sensible invalidated their evidence.\* "For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together." Mark. xiv. 56. "At the last came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. But neither so did their witness agree together." As they gave this testimony of their own accord, so it was most false. For Jesus never said he would destroy and build the temple of Jerusalem, as they affirmed. At the first passover indeed, after he had banished the traders out of the temple, the Jews required him to shew by what authority he took upon him to make that reformation; and in answer he referred them to the miracle of his resurrection: "Destroy," said he, "this temple," pointing probably to his body, " and I will raise it up in three days." The witnesses, it seems, either through ignorance or malice, perverted his answer into an affirmation that he was able to destroy and build the temple in three And the judges reckoned it blasphemy, because it was an effect that could be accomplished by nothing less than divine power. Wherefore these men are justly branded through the world with the name of "false witnesses," and their testimony was deservedly disregarded by our Lord. When the High-Priest found that Jesus took little notice of the things which the witnesses said against him, he fell into a passion, supposing that he intended to put an affront upon the council; for he arose from his seat, and spake to him, desiring him to give the reason of his conduct. † " And the High-Priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held

<sup>\*</sup> Evidence. Mark xiv. 56.

<sup>+</sup> Conduct. Matt. xxvi. 62.

his peace, and answered nothing."\* Upon this, some of the council spake to him, saying, "Art thou the Christ? tell us." And he said unto them, "If I tell you, you will not believe. And if I also ask you," that is, propose the proofs of my mission, and require you to give your opinion of them, "ye will not answer me, nor

let me go."

The High-Priest, therefore, to cut the trial short and ensuare Jesus, obliged him upon oath to tell, whether or no he was the Christ. "And the High-Priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us. Whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God?" The craft of the question lay in this, that if Jesus answered it in the affirmative, they were ready to condemn him as a blasphemer; but if in the negative, they proposed to punish him as an impostor, who, by accepting the honours and titles of the Messiali from the people, had deceived them. " And Jesus said, I am."; Being put upon oath, or, according to Jewish customs, being adjured by the magistrate, he could no longer decline answering. † He therefore confessed the charge, and added, "Nevertheless," ( TANY, moreover,) "I say unto you, Hereafter, | ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven:" Ye shall see the sign from heaven, which we have so often demanded in confirmation of my mission. " Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God?"\*\* A number of them cried out together, feigning great astonishment at the blasphemy, as they were pleased to call it, of his answer, and desiring him to repeat it, lest they might have mistaken him. "And he

<sup>\*</sup> Nothing. Mark xiv. 61.

<sup>†-</sup> I am. Mark xiv. 62.

<sup>†</sup> Answering. Levit. v. 1.

Moreover. See Blackwall's Sac. Class. vol. ii. p. 132.

<sup>#</sup> Hereafter. Απ αgτι. Heinsius would have these words joined together, so as to make απαgτι, the same with απαgτισμενας, vere plane.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Go.l. Luke xxii. 70.

said unto them, Ye say that I am." This, according to the Jewish manner of speaking, was a plain and strong affirmation of the thing expressed. When the High-Priest heard our Lord's second reply, he solemnly rent his clothes,\* crying out that he had spoken blasphemy, and appealing to the council: " What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy." The council replied, "As you have justly observed, what need have we of witness now, seeing we ourselves have heard in what manner he has blasphemed." And being asked what punishment he deserved, they answered, that he deserved death. They condemned him unanimously, excepting Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea, and a few more, who being his disciples, (John xii. 42) would, if they were present, remonstrate no doubt against the iniquity of this sentence. "Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him, and others smote him with the palms of their hands," saying, "Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?" It was hardly possible for those miscreants to invent any thing more expressive of the contempt in which they held our Lord's pretensions to be the Messiah.

Thus was the Judge of the world placed at the bar of his own creatures, falsely accused by the witnesses, unjustly condemned by his judges, and barbarously insulted by all. Yet because it was agreeable to the end of his coming, he patiently submitted, though he could with a frown have made his judges, his accusers, and

<sup>\*</sup> Clothes. Rending of clothes was an expression sometimes of deep gricf, sometimes of holy zeal. The precepts, Lev. x. 6. xxi. 10, forbidding the high priest to rend his clothes, relates only to the pontifical garments, and to private mourning, that is, mourning on account of the calamities befalling himself or friends. Griefs of this kind the chief minister of religion was not to make public by any outward sign whatever. But it was neither unlawful nor unusual for him to rend his ordinary garments on account of public calamities, or instances of gross wickedness, as a testimony of his grief for the one, and abhorrence of the other. See 1 Maccab. xi. 71. That the High-Priest was clothed in ordinary apparel on this occasion, appears from Exod. xxix. 29, 30, where the pontifical garments are ordered to descend from father to son; and therefore were to be worn only at their consecration, and when they ministered.

those who had him in custody, all to drop down dead in a

moment, or shrivel into nothing.

During the time that this important event was depending, Peter, who had followed our Lord at a distance, and had taken his place in the hall adjacent to the room in which Jesus was examined, and hoped to have remained among the servants unsuspected, was warming himself at the fire, desiring to see the issue of this fatal night. He had been admitted by a maid-servant, through the interest of John, who went in with him, but advanced it should seem into the hall of judgment. The servant-maid, fixing her eyes upon him, charged him with being one of the disciples of Jesus. But Peter, surprised at the unexpected discovery, confidently denied him before them all, saying, "I do not so much as know him, nor understand what you mean." Upon which, turning away as one affronted, he went out into the portico, and while he was there, the cock crew.\*

Simon Peter, incommoded probably by the coldness of the air, returned to the hall, and mingled with the numerous servants there in waiting; when another young woman observing him, said "Surely this is one of them, and perhaps he has come hither as a spy." This excited a general attention to him, and he was asked, "Art thou not one of his disciples?" Another perceiving his confusion, charged it home upon him, saying, "It is cer-

<sup>\*.</sup> Cock Crew. It is strange that this circumstance did not remind him of our Lord's prediction; perhaps it did; and he might return resolved to be more courageous should he be again attacked.

To this part of the history it has been objected, that the Jews, as their tradition goes, never kept any cocks within the walls of Jerusalem, and consequently that Peter could not hear them crow, while he was in the High-Priest's palace. But the objection may be removed either by calling the tradition itself in question, because it contradicts the testimony of writers whose veracity is indubitable, and who could not but know the customs of the age in which they lived: also because many traditions of this kind were framed by the Rabbies, with a view to magnify the sanctity of Jerusalem. Or the objection may be removed by supposing that the Romans who lived in the city, neglecting the institutions of the Jews, might keep this kind of fowl about their houses, perhaps for their table, or for their auspices, a sort of divination they were peculiarly addicted to.

tainly so: thou art also one of them, and deservest to suffer with thy master." Peter being now exceedingly alarmed, and wishing to throw off all suspicion of his belonging to Jesus, again denied in the strongest manner, even with an oath, and said to his accuser, "Man, why dost thou talk thus? I solemnly declare, and call God to witness, that I am not one of them, and do not so much as know the man."

This positive denial seemed to lull the suspicions of the company for the present; but, about an hour afterwards, another man in the company detected him, and affirmed that he was indeed a follower of Jesus, and that his dialect, which was that of Galilee, betrayed him; for it was understood that our Lord's disciples were chiefly of that district. At this moment, one of the domestic servants of the High-Priest, and a relation of Malchus, whose ear had been cut off by Peter, pressed the charge home upon him, and said, "How can you have the effrontery to deny it? Take care what you say, Did not I myself see you in the garden with him?" Then Peter, terrified to the last degree, denied it again more violently than ever; and that he might no more be called in question, began to curse and swear, solemnly imprecating the judgments of God upon himself, if he knew any thing about Jesus. And having thus repeatedly denied his master in this shocking manner, he immediately went out; and at that moment, according to the warning first given him, the cock crew the second time. But just before he withdrew, our Lord having been examined, was brought back through the hall, and probably was within hearing, when Peter thus ungratefully and profanely denied him. turned about, and looked at Peter, with such a mixture of earnestness and tenderness in his countenance, as, through the energy of the Spirit that attended it, pierced him to the heart; so that when Peter recollected what our Lord had first said to him when he predicted his fall. he could no longer bear the place, or stand in the presence of his injured Master, but, overwhelmed with grief and shame, and covering his head with his mantle, he went out

and wept bitterly, earnestly intreating the divine pardon

for so great and inexcusable a sin.\*

The priests and elders having condemned Jesus for the pretended crime of blasphemy, consulted together again, and resolved to carry him before the governor, that he likewise might give sentence against him. They could not otherwise accomplish their purpose; the power of life and death being now taken out of their hands. "Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment, the prætorium, the governor's palace," John xviii. 28. From the history of the Acts it appears, that the Roman governors of Judea resided commonly at Cesarea, and that there was only an inferior officer in Jerusalem, with a single legion to keep the peace of the city. At the great festivals, however, they came up to prevent or suppress tumults, and to administer justice. Accordingly it is insinuated, John xvii. 39, that Pilate was wont to give judgment in Jerusalem at the passovers: "Ye have a custom that I should release unto you one at the passover." Being come, therefore, as usual, a while before the feast, Pilate heard of the stir that was among the rulers, and was informed of the character of the person on whose account it was made. It seems Nicodemus, or Joseph of Arimathea, or some other friend, had told him of the affair; for he entertained a just notion of it, "He knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy." Having purified themselves in order to eat the passover, they would not enter the palace which was the house of a heathen, for fear of contracting de-

<sup>\*</sup> Sin. The admonition of St. Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor. x. 12,) "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," is strongly enforced by this affecting story. Self-confidence, cowardice, needless association with the enemies of Christ, are evils which the example of Peter should teach us to shun. Who can help saying, when such a champion falls, "Lord, what is man!" What is our boasted strength but weakness! and if we are left to ourselves, how do our most solemn resolutions melt like snow before the sun. Let us then watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation; and if, at any time, temptation has prevailed, let us like Peter retire from the snares and business of life, and weep bitterly for our transgressions.

filement. They stood, therefore, before the palace waiting for the governor, who on such occasions came out to them.

And now Judas Iscariot, who had delivered his Master into the hands of the council, finding his project turn out quite otherwise than he expected, was pierced with the deepest remorse. Therefore, to make some reparation for the injury, he came and confessed his sin openly before the chief priests, and offered them the money with which they had hired him to commit it, earnestly wishing that they would take it back. But they would not relax their sentence in the least, nor abate the violence of their malicious prosecution; affirming, that notwithstanding he might think the prisoner innocent, and for that reason had sinned in bringing mischief upon him, they were not to blame, because they knew him to be a blasphemer who deserved to die. And they said, "What is that to us? see thou to that." When Judas found that he could give his Master no help, his conscience being enraged, lashed him more furiously than before, suggesting thoughts which by turns made the deepest wounds in his soul. Wherefore, unable to sustain the misery of those agonizing reflections, he threw down the wages of his iniquity in the temple, probably in the treasury before the Levite porters and others who happened to be there, with a confession of his sin and of his Master's innocence, then went away in despair and hanged himself.\* perished Judas Iscariot the traitor, a miserable example of the fatal influence of covetousness, and a standing monument of the Divine vengeance. The thirty pieces of silver which Judas threw down in the temple, were gathered up and delivered to the priests; for they consulted

<sup>\*</sup> Hanged bimself. Peter seems to give a different account of the traitor's death, -Acts i. 18. "Falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." To reconcile these two passages, it is only necessary to suppose that Judas hanged himself on some tree growing out of a precipice; and that the branch breaking, or the knot of the handkerchief, or whatever else he hanged himself with, opening, he fell down headlong, and dashed himself to pieces, so that his bowels gushed out.

among themselves about the use they were to make of the money, and at length agreed to buy the potter's field with it, for burying strangers in, who happening to die at Jerusalem had no burial place of their own. "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy\* the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value: and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me." The historian's mentioning the purchasing of the potter's field with the money for which Judas betrayed his Master, being a public appeal to a very public transaction, puts the truth of this part of the

history beyond all manner of exception.

Jesus being carried into the palace, and the priests with the multitude having taken their places round the tribunal, the governor came out, and said, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" John xviii. 29. They. answered, haughtily, and said-unto him, " If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him unto thee." Then said Pilate unto them, "Take ye him and judge him according to your law." But the priests peremptorily refused this proposal, because it condemned the whole of their procedure, and told him that it was not lawful for them to put any man to death; by which they insinuated that the prisoner was guilty of a capital crime, that he deserved the highest punishment, and that none but the governor himself could give judgment in the cause. Jews, therefore, said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." The evangelist observes, that the Jews were directed thus to speak and act, that there might be an accomplishment of the divine counsels concerning the manner of our Lord's death; of which counsels Jesus himself had given frequent intimations in the course of his ministry. "That the saying of Jesus might be ful-

<sup>\*</sup> Jeremy. How this transaction comes to be connected with a prophecy spoken by Jeremiah, is not easily accounted for, as the prophecy cited is found in the writings of Zechariah only. The Syriac version indeed has only, "which was spoken by the prophet." If this be the genuine reading, it proves that the name Jeremiah was inserted by some officious transcriber.

filled which he spake, signifying what death he should die." Thus was the governor's first attempt to save Jesus frustrated.'

Pilate being obliged to proceed to the trial, the Jews began and accused Jesus of seditious practices, affirming that he had used every method to dissuade the people from paying taxes to Cæsar, whose revenue, Pilate was particularly bound to take care of; also that he had affected regal power, under pretence of being their Messiah, in open contempt of the Emperor's majesty, and of his governor's authority. But though they spake as if they had tried him upon those articles and convicted him, it was altogether false; neither offered they any proof in support of what they alleged. "Then Pilate entered into the judgment-hall again, and called Jesus, and asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest;" that is, according to the Hebrew idiom, "It is as thou sayest." St. John tells us that our Lord added, Dost thou ask this question of thine own accord, because thou thinkest that I have affected regal power; or dost thou ask it according to the information of the priests, who affirm that I have acknowledged myself to be a king? "Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?\*" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Dost thou think that I am acquainted with the religious opinions and disputes of the Jews? Thine own nation, and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me, as a seditious person, one that assumes the title of king: what hast thou done to merit the charge of sedition?" Jesus answered, "Though I have acknowledged to you that I am a king, I am no raiser of sedition, for my kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: I would have endeavoured to establish myself on the throne by force of arms." But as I have done neither, it is evident, therefore, that the kingdom which I. claim is not of this world. Pilate therefore said unto

<sup>\*</sup> Me. John xviii. 34, &c. -

him, "Art thou a king, notwithstanding thy kingdom is not of this world?" Jesus answered, "I came into the world for this end, that by explaining and proving the truth, I might impress it upon men's consciences, and make them obedient to its laws. In this consisteth my kingdom, and all the lovers of truth obey me, and are my subjects." This is what Paul calls "the good confession," which he tells Timothy, Jesus witnessed before Pontius Pilate.\* And justly does the Apostle term it so. For our Lord did not deny the truth to save his own life, but gave all his followers an example highly worthy of their imitation. It is remarkable that Christ's assuming the title of king did not offend the governor in the least, though it was the principal crime laid to his charge. Probably the account he gave of his kingdom and subjects, led Pilate to take him for some stoic philosopher, who pleased himself with the chimerical royalty attributed by his sect to the sapiens or wise man. † Supposing, therefore, that Jesus was a disciple of Zeno, when Pilate heard him speak of truth, and affirm that his kingship consisted in bearing witness to truth, and that every one that loved truth was his subject, he might think that he was claiming the prerogative of the sapiens, though in terms somewhat new. Accordingly he desired him to explain what he meant by truth? then going out to the multitude, he told them that he found no fault in Jesus, no opinion inconsistent with the good of society, neither any action nor pretension that was criminal in the least degree.

The priests, it seems, were not disconcerted by the public declaration which the governor, in obedience to conscience and truth, made of the prisoner's innocence; for they persisted in their accusations with more vehemence than before, affirming that he had attempted to raise a sedition in Galilee. They artfully mentioned Galilee to inflame Pilate, who they knew was prejudiced against the people of that country. To this heavy charge

<sup>\*</sup> Pontius Pilate. 1 Tim. vi. 13.

<sup>†</sup> Wise man. See Hor. lib. i. sat. 3 fine.

Jesus made no answer at all. Nay, he continued mute. notwithstanding the governor expressly required him to speak in his own defence. A conduct so extraordinary. in such circumstances, astonished Pilate exceedingly; for he had good reason to be persuaded of Christ's innocence. The truth is, he was altogether ignorant of the divine counsel by which the whole affair was directed. As for Jesus, he might justly decline making public defences, not from a consciousness of guilt, but lest the common people, moved by what he must have said, should have asked his release, and prevented his death; in which respect he hath shewed his followers a noble example of courage. Besides the gross falsehood of the accusation, known to the chief priests themselves, and to all the inhabitants of Galilee, rendered any reply needless. In the mean time, because the priests spake of a sedition in Galilee, Pilate asked if the prisoner came out of that country? and being informed that he did, he ordered him to be carried away immediately to Herod, who was then in Jerusalem.\* Pilate supposed that the prince in whose dominions the sedition was said to have been raised, could be a better judge of the affair than he. Moreover, as Herod was a Jew, expert in the religion and customs of his country, the governor imagined that he might have had influence with the priests to desist. Or if, at their solicitation, he should condemn Jesus, Pilate thought to escape the guilt and infamy of putting an innocent person to death. He might also propose to regain Herod's, friendship, formerly lost perhaps by encroaching on his privileges. But whatever was his motive, the king, who had of a long time desired to see Jesus, rejoiced at this opportunity; for he hoped to have had the pleasure of seeing him work some miracle or other. Nevertheless, Jesus did not think proper thus to gratify the curiosity of a tyrant, nor so much as answer one of his questions, though he proposed many to him. Herod finding himself thus disappointed, ordered Christ to be clothed with an old robe, in colour like those

<sup>\*</sup> Jerusalem. Luke xxiii. 6, 7.

which kings used to wear, and permitted his attendants to insult him, perhaps with an intention to provoke him to work a miracle, though it should have been of a hurtful kind. Our Lord's being dressed in this manner by Herod's order, shews that here the priests had accused him of nothing but of having assumed the titles and honours belonging to Messiah; for the affront put upon him was plainly in derision of that pretension. other head of accusation, his having attempted to raise a sedition in Gallilee on account of the tribute, they durst not touch upon, because Herod could not fail to know the gross falsehood of it. No crime being laid to his charge, the king sent him back to Pilate with an account of his innocence. Before this Herod and Pilate had been at enmity between themselves. Probably the latter had encroached upon Herod's jurisdiction, by giving judgment in causes which concerned his subjects. Herod, therefore, looking upon the sending of Jesus to him to be judged, because he was a Galilean, as a reparation for former offences, was forthwith reconciled to Pilate.

At former passovers the governor had courted the favour of the populace, by gratifying them with the pardon of any one prisoner they pleased. Wherefore, when the crowd was gathered, they begged him to do as he had ever done to them. "And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. And the multitude crying aloud, began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them." Pilate, glad of this opportunity, told them it was very true that he had used to do so, and asked them whether they would have Barabbas or Jesus released. But without waiting for an answer, he offered to release Jesus, knowing that the chief priests had delivered him for envy; a sentiment in which he was greatly confirmed by Herod, who had not found him guilty of the things whereof the priests had accused him.

While these things were doing, Pilate received a message from his wife, who happened to be with him in Jerusalem, and who had had a dream that morning about

Jesus, that gave her the utmost uneasiness. Perhaps it presaged the vengeance of God pursuing her husband and family, on account of the injustice he was going to commit. But whatever the dream was, it made such an impression on this Roman lady, that she could not be easy till she sent an account of it to her husband, who was sitting on the tribunal in the pavement, and begged him to have no hand in the death of the righteous person he was judging. The people had not yet said whether they would have Jesus or Barabbas released to them. Therefore when Pilate received his wife's message, he called the chief priests and the rulers together, and, in the hearing of the multitude, made a speech to them, wherein he gave an account of the examination which Jesus had undergone at his tribunal, and at Herod's, and declared that in both courts the trial had turned out honourably for his character. Wherefore he proposed to them that he should be the object of the people's favour. Pilate did the priests the honour of desiring to know their inclinations in particular, perhaps with a design to soften them. But he expected that however averse they might be to his proposal, it would have been acceptable to the populace, not doubting but they would embrace the first opportunity of declaring in his favour. Yet he was disappointed. "But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude, that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus," Matt. xxvii. 20. And they cried out all at once,\* saying, "Away with this man, crucify this fellow, and release unto us Barabbas," Luke xxiii. 18.

<sup>\*</sup> Once, &c. John says, xviii. 40, "Then they cried all again," ( $\pi\alpha\lambda w$ ) saying, &c. But the word  $\pi\alpha\lambda w$  does not imply, that the people had refused Jesus, and asked Barabbas before this. The proper meaning of the passage is, that they cried out in opposition to Pilate, who proposed to release Jesus. For  $\pi\alpha\lambda w$  signifies, not only repetition, but opposition; contra, e diverso: thus, Matt. iv. 7, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord;" that is, it is written on the other hand, in opposition to the text which the tempter had perverted.  $\Pi\alpha\lambda w$  signifies also addition, Matt. v. 33.  $\pi\alpha\lambda w$  nussaure, Moreover ye have heard, &c. Wherefore the proper translation of John xviii. 40, is, Then cried they all in return, saying, &c.

Thus the Jewish rulers demanded the release of Barabbas, a notorious villain, who had really been guilty of sedition, the crime whereof they falsely accused Jesus; had made an insurrection with some accomplices, and committed murder in the insurrection. For this infamous creature the people likewise begged life, preferring him to the Son of God, who had made it his whole study to do them good. "Pilate therefore willing to release Jesus, spake again to them,"\* saying, "Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?" He had asked this question before, and repeated it now, not so much for his own information, as to express his surprise at their choice. They said, "Barabbas." Pilate saith unto them, "What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ?" Is it possible that you desire me to crucify him whom so many of you have acknowledged as your Messiah? But they all cried, saying, "Crucify him, crucify him," Luke xxiii. 21. Then Pilate said unto them the third time, "Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him and let him go." And they cried out the more exceedingly, "Crucify him." So bent were they to have him killed, that though the governor urged them again and again to desire his release, declaring his innocence, and offered three several times to dismiss him, they would not hear it, uttering their rage sometimes in hollow inarticulate murmurs, and sometimes in furious outcries: to such a pitch were their passions raised by the craft of the priests. Pilate, therefore, finding it in vain to struggle with them, called for a basin of water, and washed his hands before the multitude, crying out at the same time, that the prisoner was a good man, and that he was innocent of his blood. Perhaps Pilate did this agreeably to the rites of heathenism, which prescribed lustrations for such as ignorantly or unwillingly had committed murder. Or rather, as he intended thereby to make an impression on a Jewish mob, he did it in compliance with the institutions of Moses, which by this time he

<sup>\*</sup> Them. Luke xxiii. 20.

could not be altogether ignorant of. It would appear that he thought to have terrified the mob; for one of his understanding and education could not but be sensible, that all the water in the universe was not able to wash away the guilt of an unrighteous sentence. Nevertheless, solemn as his declaration was, it had no effect; for the people continued inflexible, crying out with one consent, that they were willing to take the guilt-of his death upon themselves. "His blood be on us and on our children:" \* an imprecation the weight of which lies heavy on the nation to this day! The governor finding by the sound of the cry that it was general, and that the people were fixed in their choice, passed the sentence they desired. "And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And so Pilate willing to content the

people, released Barabbas unto them."†

The Romans usually scourged the criminals whom they condemned to be crucified. This was the reason that Pilate ordered our Lord to be scourged, before he delivered him to the soldiers to be crucified. The soldiers having received orders to crucify Jesus, carried him into the prætorium after they had scourged him. Here they added the shame of disgrace to the bitterness of his punishment; for, sore as he was by reason of the stripes they had laid on him, they dressed him as a fool, in an old purple robe, in derision of his being king of the Jews. Then they put a reed into his hand instead of a sceptre; and having made a wreath of thorns, they put it on his head for a crown, forcing it down in such a rude manner, that his temples were torn, and his face besmeared with blood. To the Son of God, in this condition, the rude soldiers bowed the knee, pretending respect, but at the same time gave him severe blows, which drove the prickles of the wreath afresh into his temples,

<sup>\*</sup> Children. Matt. xxvii, 25.

<sup>†</sup> Them. Mark xv. 15. Luke xxiii. 24, 25.

<sup>†</sup> Gracified. See Jos. Bell. in 25. Lucian Revivisc. p. 385, and Elsner in loc.

then spit upon him, to express the highest contempt of They smote him, some with the reed, and others with their hands. Those who smote him with the reed, laid the blows upon the thorns with which his head was crowned; those who smote him with their hands aimed at his cheeks, or some part of his body. The governor, who according to custom was present all the while, found his heart ready to burst with grief. The sight of an innocent and virtuous man treated with such barbarity, raised in him the most painful feelings of pity. And though he had given sentence that it should be as the Jews desired, and had delivered Jesus to the soldiers to be crucified, he thought if he was shewed to the people in that condition, they might yet relent and let him go. With this view, therefore, he resolved to carry him out, a spectacle which might have softened the most envenomed, obdurate, enraged enemies. And that the impression might be the stronger, he went out himself and spake to them. "Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold I bring him forth to you, that ve may know that I find no fault in him." Though I have sentenced him to die, and have scourged him as one that is to be crucified, I bring him forth to you this once, that I may testify to you again, how fully I am persuaded of his innocence; and that ye may yet have an opportunity to save his life. Upon this Jesus appeared on the pavement, having his face, hair, and shoulders all clotted with blood. But that the sight of Jesus in this distress might make the greater impression on the multitude, Pilate, while he was coming forward, cried, "Behold the man!" As if he had said, Will nothing make you relent? have you no bowels, no feelings of pity? can you bear to see the innocent thus injured? But all was to no purpose. The priests whose rage and malice had extinguished not only the sentiments of justice and feelings of pity natural to the human heart, but that love which countrymen bear to one another, no sooner saw Jesus than

<sup>\*</sup> Him. John xix. 4.

they began to fear the fickle populace might relent. And therefore, laying decency aside, they led the way to the mob, crying out with all their might, "Crucify him!

crucify him!"

- The governor having now laid aside all thoughts of saving Jesus, gave him up to the will of his enemies, and commanded the soldiers to prepare for his execution. The soldiers obeyed, and led Jesus away, after they had clothed him in his own garments. It is not said that they took the crown of thorns off his head. Probably he died wearing it, that the title which was written over him might be the better understood. According to custom, Jesus walked to the place of execution bearing his cross, that is, the transverse beam to which he was to be nailed; the other being at the place already. But the fatigue of the preceding night spent without sleep, the sufferings he had undergone in the garden, his having been hurried from place to place, and obliged to stand the whole time of his trials, the want of food and loss of blood which he had sustained, and not his want of courage on this occasion, concurred to make him so faint that he was not long able to bear his cross. The soldiers therefore laid it on one Simon, a native of Cyrene in Egypt, the father of Alexander and Rufus, two noted men among the first Christians at the time Mark wrote his gospel, and forced him to bear it after Jesus. They did this, however, not out of compassion to Jesus, but for fear he should die with fatigue, and by that means elude his punishment.

As Jesus went along, he was followed by a great crowd, particularly of women, who sighed, shed tears, and bitterly lamented the severity of his lot. 'Jesus, who ever felt the woes of others more than he did his own, forgetting his distress at the very time that it lay heaviest upon him, turned about, and with a benevolence and tenderness truly divine, said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me; but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and

to the hills, Cover us:"\* The calamities about to fall on you and your children are most terrible, and call for the bitterest lamentations; for in those days of vengeance, you will vehemently wish that you had not given birth to a generation, whose wickedness has rendered them objects of the divine wrath, to a degree that never was experienced in the world before. The thoughts of those calamities afflict my soul far more than the feeling of my own sufferings. " For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"-If the Romans are permitted by heaven to inflict such heavy punishments on me who am innocent, how dreadful must the vengeance be which they shall inflict on the nation, whose sins cry aloud to heaven, hastening the pace of the divine judgments, and rendering the perpetrators as fit for punishment as dry wood is for burning.

"And there were also two other malefactors," or rather, "two others who were malefactors, led with him to be put to death. And he bearing his cross, went forth to a place, called the place of a scull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha."† The place of execution was called Golgotha, or the place of a scull, from the criminals' bones which lay scattered there. Here some of Christ's friends offered him a stupifying potion, to render him insensible of the ignominy and pain of his punishment. But he refused it, because he would bear his sufferings, however sharp, not by intoxicating and stupifying himself, but through the strength of patience, fortitude, and faith. "And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a scull, they gave him vinegar ‡ to drink, mingled with gall,

<sup>\*</sup> Us. Luke xxiii. 17, &c. + Golgotha. John xix. 17.

<sup>†</sup> Vinegar, &c. Mark says, "They gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh," expurgita perce circle. But the two Evangelists speak of the same ingredients. For though Mark terms that wine which Matthew calls vinegar, he may really have meant vinegar, which was a common drink among the ancients, and such as might very properly be called wine, in regard it was usually made of wine, or of the juice of grapes. Besides, it is well known that the ancients gave the general name of wine to all fermented liquors whatsoever. As to the other ingredient of this

(Mark xv. 23, they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh:) and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink," (Mark says he received it not.) When Jesus refused the potion, the soldiers, according to custom, stripped him quite naked, and in that condition began to fasten him to the tree. But while they were piercing his hands and his feet with the nails, instead of crying out through the accuteness of his pain, he calmly though fervently prayed for them, and for all who had any hand in his death, beseeching God to forgive them, and excusing them by the only circumstance that could alleviate their guilt—their ignorance. "And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, that is, nailed him to his cross; and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left." Then said Jesus, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." This was infinite meekness and goodness, truly worthy of God's only begotten Son; an example of forgiveness, which though it never can be equalled by any, is fit to be imitated by all. Dr. Heylin\* has well described our Lord's passion as follows: "The appointed soldiers dig the hole in which the cross was to be erected. The nails, and the hammer are ready. The cross is placed on the ground, and Jesus lies down upon the bed of sorrows. They nail him to it. They erect it. His nerves crack. His blood distills. He hangs upon his wounds, naked, "a spectacle to heaven and earth." Thus was the only begotten Son of God, who came down to save the world, crucified by his own creatures. †

potion, mentioned by the sacred historians, let it be observed, that the word  $\chi_{OLH}$  in the LXX. is often used as the translation of the Hebrew word with which properly was the name of a poisonous herb, common in those countries, and remarkable for its bitterness. Hence an infusion of it is called  $v Sag \pi ug v$ , bitter water, Jer. xxiii. 15, and  $v Sag \chi_{CAHS}$ , Jer. viii. 14, ix. 14. Probably it was a weak infusion of this herb in vinegar and water, which our Lord's friends offered him, to make him insensible, and shorten his life.

<sup>\*</sup> Dr. Heylin. Theolog. Lect. p. 103, at the end of the vol.

<sup>†</sup> Creatures. The ignominy of his punishment may be learned from a heathen: Cic. pro Rabir. "Misera est ignominia judiciorum publicorum, misera multatio bonorum, miserum exilium; sed tamen in omni calamitate retinetur aliquod vesti-

"Hear, O heavens! O earth, earth, earth, hear! The Lord hath nourished and brought up children, and they

have rebelled against him."

As usual, the governor put up a title or writing on the cross, signifying the crime for which Jesus was con-This writing was in black characters, on a whitened board, and in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages, that foreigners as well as natives might be able to read it : JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. When the priests read this title, they were exceedingly displeased: because, as it represented the crime for which Jesus was condemned, it insinuated that he had been acknowledged for the Messiah. The priests thought themselves highly affronted, and came to Pilate in great concern, begging that the writing might be altered. But he would not hear them, having intended the affront, because they had constrained him to crucify Jesus, contrary both to his judgment and inclination. When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, that is, erected his cross, they divided his garments, and cast lots for the shares. His coat was excepted out of this division, because being without a seam, they agreed to cast lots for it by itself. The Evangelists observe, that all this was done agreeably to an ancient prophecy, wherein these circumstances of the Messiah's sufferings were mentioned, to shew that he was to be crucified naked, and consequently, that he was to suffer a most ignominious, as well as a most painful death. "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments (and made four parts, to every soldier a part) and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top

gium libertatis; mors denique si proponitur, in libertate moriamur. Carnifex vero, et obductio capitis, et nomen ipsum crucis, absit non modo a corpore civium Romanorum, sed etiam a cogitatione, occulis, auribus. Harum enim omnium rerum non solum eventus atque perpessio, sed etiam conditio, expectatio, mentio denique indigna cive Romano, atque homine libero est." In Verrem, lib. 5. "Facinus est vincire civem Romanum, scelus verberare, prope parricidium necare. Quid dicam in crucem tollere? crudelissimum teterrimumque supplicium: verbo satis digno tam nefaria res appellari nullomodo potest,"

throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did," Mark xv. 25. "And it was the third hour,\* and they cruci-

<sup>\*</sup> Third hour. The third Jewish hour ended at our nine o'clock in the morning. By Mark's account, therefore, the crucifixion and the lots may have been finished at the striking of eight, when the third Jewish hour, answering to our ninth, began. This indeed seems inconsistent with John xix. 13, who tells us, that when Pilate sat on the judgment seat in the pavement, and brought Jesus out to the people the last time, it was about the sixth hour, the sixth Roman hour, the same with our six o'clock in the morning. But to reconcile these seemingly opposite accounts, the following series of transactions should be considered. After the governor brought Jesus out, he spake both to the people and to the priests, before he finally condemned him. And though each speech is discussed by the evangelist in a single sentence, they may have been drawn out to some length, that, if possible, an impression might thereby be made on the people. When Jesus was delivered to the soldiers, they had to strip him of the purple robe, and to clothe him in his own garments; the thieves were to be brought out of prison: the necessary preparations for the crucifixion of the three were to be made; in particular, crosses were to be provided; the crimes laid to the charge of the prisoners were to be written on whitened boards with black characters; vinegar with a spunge and a reed was to be got for refreshing the criminals, and keeping them from fainting, under their punishment; soldiers were to be appointed for watching the cross; and these had to provide themselves victuals, because persons sometimes lived on their crosses several days. In travelling from the prætorium, which may have been sitnated in that quarter of the town which was farthest from the place of execution. they could move but slowly, because Jesus being very much fatigued, must have borne his cross with difficulty. When he grew faint it would be some time before they could find one to assist him in bearing it. And being come to the place of execution, they had the crosses to make ready, by fixing the transverse beams on their proper stalks, the prisoners were to be stripped and nailed, the titles were to be affixed, the holes for the crosses to be dug, the crosses themselves were to be crected and fixed, and, last of all, the prisoners' clothes were to be divided by lot. These, with other circumstances unknown to us, accompanying executions of this kind, may be supposed to have filled up the whole space between six in the morning, when the governor shewed Jesus the last time, and the third Jewish hour, when Jesus was crucified; that is to say, a space less than two hours. For about the sixth hour, the expression in John, may signify a while after the striking of six, when the sixth hourends; and the third hour, the expression in Mark, an-

fied him:" or rather "it was the third hour, when they crucified him." The Evangelist means that it was the third Jewish hour when the cross was erected, and the clothes divided; for he had mentioned our Lord's being nailed to the cross in the precedent verse. "And sitting down, they watched him there:" Matt. xxvii. 38. "Then were there two thieves crucified with him: one on the right hand, and the other on the left." They placed Jesus in the middle, by way of mock honour, because he had called himself a king, and was now crowned with thorns. Or if the priests had any hand in this, they might design thereby to impress the spectators the more strongly with the idea of his being an impostor, and to make them look on him as the chief malefactor. scripture was fulfilled which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors." In giving the history of our Lord's sufferings, the Evangelists are at great pains to make their readers sensible that all the circumstances of them were fore-ordained of God. Their design in this was to prevent the offence which might otherwise have been taken at Christ's sufferings.

The common people, whom the priests had incensed against our Lord, by the malicious lies which they spread concerning him, and which they pretended to found on the evidence of the witnesses, seeing him hang infamously on the cross, and reading the superscription that was placed over his head, expressed their indignation against him by railing on him. "And they that passed by, railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, Save thyself, and come down from the cross." The rulers having, as they imagined, wholly overturned his pretensions as the Messiah, ridiculed him on that head, and with a meanness of soul which many infamous wretches would have scorned, mocked him while in the agonies of death. "And the people stood beholding: and the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He

swering to the ninth Roman hour, may signify at the beginning thereof, or at the striking of eight, when the eighth hour ends, and the ninth begins.

saved others; himself he cannot save: if he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him." They scoffed at the miracles by which he demonstrated himself the Messiah, and promised faith, on condition he would prove his pretensions, by coming down from the cross. In the mean time, nothing could be more false and hypocritical: for they continued in their unbelief, notwithstanding Jesus raised himself from the dead, which was a much greater miracle than his coming down from the cross would have been; a miracle also that was attested by witnesses whose veracity they could not call in question. It was told them by the soldiers, whom they had themselves placed at the sepulchre to watch the body. It is plain, therefore, that the priests said they would believe if Jesus came down, not because their incorrigible stubbornness would have vielded to any proof, however convincing, but to insult Christ; fancying it impossible for him now to escape out of their hands. " And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself."† The insult did not lie in their offering our Lord vinegar; for that was the soldiers' common drink, when mixed with water. But it lay in what they said to him when they offered it; which shewed that they did him the office, not out of compassion, but purely with a view to keep him alive, that they might have the pleasure of seeing him descend from the cross by miracle. " The thieves also which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth." Luke says, that only one of them did so.

<sup>\*</sup> Him. Mark xv. 29. Luke xxiii. 35. Matt. xxvji. 42.

<sup>†</sup> Thyself. Luke xxiii. 36, 37.

<sup>‡</sup> Tceth. John xix. 19.

<sup>§</sup> So. Some commentators endeavour to remove this difficulty, by supposing that both the thieves might revile Jesus at first. But this solution is not very probable. The phrase made use of by Matthew and Mark is an hebraism: it being common in that language to express a single thing in the plural number, especially when it is not the speaker's or writer's intention to be more particular.

The other exercised a most extraordinary faith at a time when our Lord was deserted by God, mocked by men, and hanged upon a cross, as the worst of malefactors. "And one of the malefactors, which were hanged, railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" The faith of the penitent thief has something very remarkable in it. For not to mention the just sentiments he had conceived, both of his own conduct, and of Christ's character: " And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss:" he seems to have entertained a more rational and exalted notion of the Messiah's kingdom than the disciples themselves. They expected nothing but a secular empire; he gave strong intimations of his having an idea of Christ's spiritual dominion; for at the very time that Jesus was dying on the cross, he begged to be remembered by him when he came to his kingdom." "And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." It may be said indeed that the thief hoped Jesus would exert his miraculous power in delivering himself from the cross, and setting up his kingdom immediately. But even on this supposition, his faith, though not clearer and more extensive, must be praised as stronger than that of the disciples, who, because their master had suffered himself to be hanged on a tree, had almost universally despaired of his being the Messiah. However, the thief's acquiescing in the answer which Jesus made to his request, "Verily, I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," must be acknowledged a presumption in favour of the extensiveness of his faith also.

During the last three hours that our Lord hanged on

Thus, Judges xii. 7, "Then died Jephtha the Gileadite, and was buried in the cities of Gilead;" that is, in one of the cities of Gilead, as is well supplied by our translators. Thus also, Matt. xxi. 7, "And brought the ass and the colt, and put on them their clothes: and they set him, erare aurar, upon them," that is, upon one of them. The phrase in Matthew and Mark, supplied after the same manner, will run more easily thus. "And one of the thieves reviled him."

the cross, a darkness covered the face of the earth, to the great terror and amazement of the people present at his execution. This extraordinary alteration in the face of nature was peculiarly proper, whilst the sun of righteousness was withdrawing his beams from the land of Israel, and from the world, not only because it was a miraculous testimony borne by God himself to his innocence, but also because it was a fit emblem of his departure and its effects, at least till his light shone out anew with additional splendor in the ministry of his apostles. ness which now covered Judea, together with the neighbouring countries, beginning about noon and continuing till Jesus expired, was not the effect of an ordinary eclipse of the sun: for that can never happen, except when the moon is about the change; whereas now it was full moon: not to mention that total darknesses occasioned by eclipses of the sun, never continue above twelve or fifteen minutes. Wherefore it must have been produced by the Divine power, in a manner we are not able to explain.\* Jesus was now in the depth of his own sufferings. Yet when he saw his mother and her companions, their grief affected him to a great degree; particularly the distress of his

<sup>\*</sup> Explain. The Christian writers, in their most ancient apologies to the heathens, affirm, that as it was full moon at the passover when Christ was crucified, no such eclipse could happen by the course of nature. They observe also, that it was taken notice of as a prodigy by the heathens themselves. To this purpose we have still remaining the words of Phlegon the astronomer, and freed-man of Adrian, cited by Origen from his book, at a time when it was in the hands of the public: Contr. Celsum, p. 83. That heathen author, in treating of the fourth year of the two hundred and second Olympiad, which is the nineteenth of Tiberius, and supposed to be the year in which our Lord was crucified, tells us, "That the greatest eclipse of the sun that ever was known happened then; for the day was so turned into night that the stars in the heavens were seen." If Phlegon, as Christians generally suppose, is speaking of the darkness which accompanied our Lord's crucifixion, it was not circumscribed within the land of Judea, but must have been universal. This many learned men have believed, particularly Huet, Grotius, Gusset, Reland, and Alphen. Josephus, it is true, takes no notice of this wonderful phenomenon. But the reason may be, that he was unwilling to mention any circumstance favourable to christianity, of which he was no friend.

mother. Wherefore, though he was almost at the point of death, he spake a few words, in which he expressed the most affectionate regard both to her, and to them. For he told her, the disciple whom he loved, would for the sake of that love, supply his place to her after he was gone, even the place of a son: for he desired her to consider him as such, and expect from him all the duty of a "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son." But our Lord, besides expressing great filial affection towards his mother, gave the beloved disciple also a token of his high esteem. He singled him out, the only one of his friends whom he could trust, as fit to be in his stead to his mother. Accordingly he desired him expressly to reverence and love her, as if she had been his own parent. This duty the favourite disciple gladly undertook: for he carried her home with him, and maintained her from that time forth, her husband Joseph it seems being dead. Thus, in the midst of the heaviest sufferings that ever human nature sustained, Jesus demonstrated a Divine strength of benevolence. Even when his own distress was at the highest pitch, his friends had such a share of his concern, that their happiness for a while interrupted the sense of his pains, and wholly ingressed his thoughts.

A little before he expired, Jesus repeated the first verse of the twenty-second Psalm. "And about the ninth hour," answering to our three in the afternoon, "Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" or as others will have it translated, "My God, my God, to what a degree, or to what a length of time, hast thou forsaken me!" For lama in the Hebrew has this signification: "Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias." And though they misunderstood him, it might have arisen from their not hearing him distinctly. " And straightway one of them ran, and took a spunge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink." St. John informs us, that they did this in consequence of our Lord's telling them, "He thirsted." He

says also, that they put the spunge upon hyssop, that is a stalk of hyssop, called by the other Evangelists a reed. Mark observes, that the person who gave Jesus the vinegar, said, xv. 36, "Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down." But Matthew attributes that saying to the persons who stood by. It seems they repeated the words of him who administered the vinegar, expressing their desire likewise that Jesus should be kept alive as long as possible, to see if Elias would come and rescue him. "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished;" John xix. 30, namely, the work of man's redemption, to accomplish which he had come into the world. In speaking these words, he cried with an exceeding loud voice, probably to shew that his strength was not exhausted, but that he was about to give up his life of his own accord. Having thus shouted, he addressed his Father with a tone of voice such as is proper in prayer, and said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost;" leaving us the best pattern of a commendatory prayer in the article of death.

While Jesus breathed his last, the vail of the temple was miraculously rent from top to bottom, probably in presence of the priest who burnt the incense in the holy place at the evening sacrifice, and who, no doubt, gave an account of it when he came out; for the ninth hour, at which Jesus expired, was the hour of the evening sacrifice. "And the earth did quake, and the rocks rent. And the graves in the rocks were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept, arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection," Matt. xxvii. 51, 52, 53. These graves were opened by the earthquake at his death; but the dead in them did not come to life till his resurrection: "and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." It would seem, that these saints were disciples, who had died but lately. For when they went into the city, they were known to be saints by the persons who saw them; which could not well have happened, had they not been their contemporaries. And as the rending of the vail of the temple intimated, that the entrance into the holy place, the type of heaven, was

now laid open to all nations, so the resurrection of a number of saints from the dead demonstrated, that the power of death and the grave was broken: the sting was taken from death, and the victory wrested from the grave. In short, our Lord's conquests over the enemies of mankind were shewed to be complete, and an earnest was

given of a general resurrection from the dead.

"And when the Centurion which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost," Mark xv. 39, "He glorified God, by saying, Certainly this was a righteous man," Luke xxiii. 47, the character which Pilate's lady had given of him before he was condemned. According to Mark he said likewise, "Truly this man was the Son of God," or Messiah. "And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned." The people who came to behold this melancholy spectacle, were wonderfully affected when Jesus gave up the ghost. They had been instant with loud voices to have him crucified; but now that they saw the face of the creation darkened during his crucifixion, and found his death accompanied with an earthquake, as if nature had been in an agony when he died, they rightly interpreted these prodigies to be so many testimonies from God of his innocence; and their passions, which had been inflamed and exasperated against him, became quite calm, or moved them in his behalf. Some could not forgive themselves for neglecting to accept his life, when the governor offered to release him. Others were stung with remorse for having had an active hand in his death, and in the insults that were offered to him. Others felt the deepest grief at the thought of his lot, which was undeservedly severe. And these various passions appeared in their countenances. For they came away from the cruel execution pensive and silent, with downcast eyes, and hearts ready to burst: or groaning deeply within themselves, they shed tears, smote their breasts, and wailed greatly. Nor was this the temper only of a few, who may be thought to have been Christ's particular friends. It was the general condition of the people, who had come in such numbers to look on, that

when they parted after the execution, they covered the roads, and as it were darkened the whole fields around. " And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off beholding these things." Who these acquaintance were, Matthew and Mark inform us. "And many women were there (beholding afar off) which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him. Among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children." The three Evangelists agree in affirming that these women stood afar off, looking on. Yet this is not inconsistent with John xix. 25, where our Lord's mother, and her sister Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene, are said to have stood beside the They were kept at a distance a while, perhaps by the guards; or they were afraid to approach: But when the greatest part of the soldiers were drawn off, and the eclipse was begun, they gathered courage, and came so near, that Jesus had an opportunity to speak to them a lit-

tle before he expired.

The law expressly prohibited the bodies of those who were hanged, to remain all night on a tree, Deut. xxi. 22. For that reason, as well as because the sabbath was at hand, the Jews begged the favour of Pilate, that the legs of the three crucified persons might be broken to hasten their death. Pilate consented, and gave the order they desired. But the soldiers appointed to execute it, perceiving that Jesus was dead already, did not take the trouble of breaking his legs; one of them only thrust a spear into his side. The spear thrust into our Lord's side is thought to have reached his heart; for the water issuing from the wound seems to shew, that the pericardium was pierced, and that Jesus was some time dead. Or though he had not been dead, this wound was of such a kind as must have killed him outright. And therefore, as it was of the greatest importance to mankind to be ascertained of the truth of Christ's death, when the Evangelist John relates the circumstance which demonstrates it, namely, the issuing of the water out of the wound in his side, he insists upon it particularly, and mentions it as a thing which he himself saw. He adds, that his legs were

not broken, but his side pierced, that that scripture might be fulfilled which saith, "A bone of him shall not be broken;" and that other, "They shall look on him whom

they have pierced."

Among the disciples of Jesus, who beheld his execution, there was one named Joseph of Arimathea, a man remarkable for his birth and fortune, and office. Joseph had nothing to fear from the governor, who in the course of the trial had shewed the greatest inclination to release Jesus. But he had reason to fear that this action might draw upon him abundance of ill-will from the rulers, who had been at such pains to get Jesus crucified. Nevertheless the regard he had for his Master overcame all other considerations, and he asked leave to take his body down; because if no friend had obtained it, it would have been ignominiously cast out among the executed malefactors. In discharging the last duty to his Master, Joseph was assisted by another disciple, named Nicodemus, the ruler who formerly came to Jesus by night, for fear of the Jews. But he was not afraid of them now; for he shewed a courage superior to that of the apostles, bringing such a quantity of spices\* along with him as was necessary to the funeral of his Master. The two therefore taking down the naked body, wrapped it with the spices in the linen furnished

<sup>\*</sup> Spices. Those who have written upon the manners and customs of the Jews tell us, that they sometimes embalmed their dead with an aromatic mixture of myrrh, aloes, and other gums or spices, which they rubbed on the body more or less profusely according to their circumstances, and their regard to the dead. After anointing the body, they covered it with a shroud or winding-sheet, then wrapped a napkin round its head and face; others say, round the forehead only, because the Egyptian mummies are observed to have it so: last of all, they swathed the shroud round the body as tightly as possible with proper bandages made of linen. At other times they covered the whole body in a heap of spices. Thus it is said of Asa, 2 Chron. xvi. 14, "They buried him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours, and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries' art." From the quantity of myrrh and aloes made use of by Joseph and Nicodemus, viz. an hundred pound weight, it would appear, that the office performed by them to their Master was of this latter kind.

by Joseph. They received the body from the cross in the linen cloth, and covered it therewith, for the sake of decency; but in all probability they did not wrap it in the spices till they carried it into the garden, there laid it in Joseph's sepulchre, which happened to be nigh to the place of execution. The Galilean women who had waited on Jesus in his last moments, and accompanied him to the sepulchre, observing that the funeral rites were performed in a hurry, agreed among themselves to come when the sabbath was passed, and embalm their dead Lord, by anointing and swathing him in a proper manner. Accordingly, when the burial was over, they returned to the city, and bought what other spices were necessary for that purpose: Nicodemus having furnished a mixture only of myrrh and aloes. This is not inconsistent with Mark xvi. 1, where we are told, that they bought spices after the sabbath was ended. It seems the quantity which according to Luke had been provided and prepared on the night of the crucifixion, was, after the preparation, judged too small: for which reason they went the first day of the week, and bought more. Perhaps the money wherewith they purchased these spices was furnished by Mary Magdalene, one of their own number, who seems to have been a person of distinction, and had often supplied our Lord with money. Or it might be supplied by Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, if it was her who in the history of Christ's resurrection is mentioned by that name, Luke xxiv. 10.

The chief priests and Pharisees, remembering that Jesus had predicted his own resurrection more than once, came to the governor and informed him of it, begging that a guard might be ordered to the sepulchre, lest the disciples should carry his body away, and affirm that he was risen from the dead. Pilate thinking their request reasonable, allowed them to take as many soldiers as they pleased out of the cohort which at the feast came from the castle Antonia, and kept guard in the porticos of the temple. For that they were not Jewish, but Roman soldiers, whom the priests employed to watch the sepulchre, is evident from their asking them of the governor. Besides, when the soldiers returned with the news of Christ's resurrec-

tion, the priests desired them to report that his disciples had stolen him away while they slept: and to encourage them to tell the falsehood boldly, promised, that if their neglect of duty came to the governor's ears, proper means should be used to pacify him, and keep them safe; a promise which there was no need of making to their own servants. "So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch." The priests going along with the party, placed them in their post, and sealed the stone that was rolled to the door of the sepulchre, to hinder the guards from combining with the disciples in carrying on any fraud.\* Thus, while the priests cautiously proposed to prevent our Lord's resurrection from being palmed upon the world, resolving no doubt to shew his body publicly after the third day as an impostor, they put the truth of Christ's resurrection beyond all question, by furnishing a number of unexceptionable witnesses to it, whose testimony they themselves could not refuse.

When the sabbath was over, which ended in the evening, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, who was the mother of James and Joses, and Salome, with Joanna, and some other pious women, were so intent on embalaing the body of Jesus, that they had another consultation about it; and not satisfied with the preparation they had made before, they bought more spices and ointments, that after a short repose, as soon as ever they could see to do it, they might go and anoint him with them, and pay him all the respect of an honourable interment.

Now Mary Magdalene, with the other Mary and Salome, were ready before it was day; and setting out very early in the morning, while it was yet dark, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, they went to

<sup>\*</sup> Fraud. See Dan. vi. 17, where we find a precaution of the like kind made use of by Darius in the case of Daniel shut up in the lions' den. " And they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords: that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel."

take a view of the sepulchre, to see if all things were as they had left them: and not long after they were followed by Joanna and the rest who were to meet them there, who came at the appointed time, bringing the spices with them. As they were advancing towards the sepulchre, they were not under any apprehension from the soldiers that were set to guard it, who had been stationed there without their knowledge on the sabbath-day, but remembering the stone that was placed at the mouth of it, they said among themselves, "Who shall roll away the stone for us from the door of the sepulchre, which all of us together have not strength to remove?" For they had seen Nicodemus and Joseph stop up the entrance with it; and it was indeed very large and heavy; but this perplexity was altogether needless; for God had provided a very extraordinary way to remove that obstruction: for a little before they arrived there was a great earthquake, which would naturally awaken the guards, if any of them had fallen asleep: and very awful and astonishing were the circumstances that attended it; "for an angel of the Lord descending from heaven had approached in sight of the guards, and rolled away the stone from the door, and sat down upon it." And, at the very same time, Jesus, like a sleeping conqueror awaking on a sudden, burst asunder the bands of death, and sprung up to a new and immortal life. But none of the guards saw him rise, being struck into the utmost consternation at the sight of the angel, who appeared to remove the stone: and well indeed they might be so; for his countenance was like the brightness of lightning, and his long-flowing garment was as white as snow, glittering with extraordinary lustre beyond what their eyes could bear. And the guards, though Romans and soldiers, trembled for fear at the sight of him, and became like so many dead men, falling down on their faces in a most helpless condition. But quickly after, presuming to lift up their eyes, and finding he had disappeared, and had left the sepulchre open, they fled to some distant place, to consult their own safety in so surprising an occurrence.

By this time the women, who had set out as it began to dawn, were near the place; and Mary Magdalene,

transported with the distinguishing ardour of her affection, advanced a little before the rest; and, it being now light enough to discern objects, she looked forward, and saw to her great surprise, that the stone was already taken away from the sepulchre, and that the tomb was open. And she was greatly astonished and alarmed at the sight, and presently concluded that the body was removed. She therefore stepped back, and informed her companions of this circumstance; upon which they also looked, and plainly found that it was as she represented, and that the stone was indeed rolled away from the entrance of the sepulchre. And not reflecting on the assurance Jesus had given them of his rising again from the dead, they knew not how to account for the removal of the stone; but Mary Magdalene and her companions having consulted a little together, as well as the confusion they were in would admit, it was thought best that some of the disciples should be immediately acquainted with it: she therefore ran back to the city with all possible dispatch, and knowing where they lodged, she comes to Simon Peter, and to John, and finding them already up, and full of solicitude about the event of this important day, she says to them, O my friends, the sepulchre is broken open, and some or other must have been there, who have removed the stone; nor is there any room to doubt but they have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him; so that I, and my companions, whom I have left behind me, cannot find any method of performing that last office of respect and affection which you know we intended.

Upon hearing this, without so much as staying to make any 'reply, Peter, whose heart was struck with such a circumstance, arose in a transport of various passions, and that other disciple whom we mentioned before, and went directly out, and never stopped till they came to the sepulchre. And not contented with the swiftest pace with which they could walk, they both ran together; and as that other disciple was the younger man, he out-ran Peter who had the start of him at the beginning, and came first to the sepulchre: and stooping down to look into it, he

saw the linen clothes, or rollers, in which the corpse had been wrapped up, lying there by themselves; but he did not at first enter into the sepulchre. Then came Simon Peter, very quickly following him, and having stooped down to look into the sepulchre, as John had done before, he was not satisfied with this: but that he might examine this important affair with such exactness as it deserved, he went into the sepulchre, and found the body was gone, but saw the linen clothes, with which it had been covered, laid by themselves, as John had observed from without. And he discovered another material circumstance, which had not been remarked before, namely, that the napkin which was about his head, was not laid with the linen clothes, but was folded up in a place by itself, in such an orderly manner, as plainly shewed, that the body was not hastily hurried away, either by friend or enemy; but made the sepulchre appear rather like a bedchamber, which a person on his awaking in the morning had leisurely quitted. Then John who came first to the sepulchre, and was less adventurous than Peter, stood hitherto without, went in also to view it; and when he saw the several parts of the funeral-dress in this situation, he was immediately convinced that his dear Master was indeed revived. For hitherto they did not know the full meaning of those various intimations of scripture to which Jesus had so often referred, to convince them that he must certainly rise from the dead; \* which if they had considered, they would cheerfully have expected the sure accomplishment of them, and would not have been so much surprised at the news which Mary brought them.

Then both the disciples went away again to their companions in the city, Peter not being so thoroughly satisfied as John was, yet greatly wondering in himself at what had happened, and very, much concerned as to the event of so surprising a circumstance. But Mary who was now returned, stood near the sepulchre after Peter and John were gone from it, not indeed going into it as they had done, but weeping without, in great perplexity at

<sup>\*</sup> Dead. See Matt. xvi. 21, &c.

her not knowing what was become of Jesus: and as she wept, she also stooped down, and looked very wishfully into the sepulchre; and there she saw with great surprise two angels in the form of men, clothed in white habits, sitting, one at the head, and the other at the feet, of that niche in the sepulchre where the body of Jesus had been And they said to her with a tender regard, "Woman, why dost thou weep thus?" And she said to them, "Alas, I have reason enough to weep; it is because they have taken away the body of Jesus my dear Lord, and I know not where they have laid him, or how the sacred corpse may be neglected or abused." And just as she had said this, hearing a sudden noise behind her, she turned back, before the angels could give her any answer; and she saw Jesus himself standing near her: and she knew not at first that it was Jesus, his habit being changed, her eyes also overflowing with tears, and her mind being so far from any expectation of his appearance, and so much distressed, that she did not so much as look up to the face of the person who appeared. Then Jesus said to her with a gentle voice, "Woman, why dost thou weep thus? and whom dost thou seek?" And she, supposing him to be the gardener, said to him, "Sir, if thou hast for any unknown reason borne him away from hence, where the master of the sepulchre saw fit so honourably to lay him but a few hours ago, I earnestly beg thou wouldst immediately tell me where thou hast put him, and I will remove him, and take effectual care that his corpse shall be decently interred elsewhere, without giving any farther trouble here."

Jesus on this, said to her, with a loud and distinct voice, in his usual affectionate way, "Mary, dost thou not know me?" Mary thereupon turning directly towards him, and eagerly fixing her eyes upon him, immediately discovered who it was; and transported with a mixture of unutterable passions, she said to him "Rabboni!" that is to say, "My great Master, and teacher!" and so much was her heart affected, that she could say no more; but immediately prostrated herself at his feet to embrace them. But Jesus said to her, "Do not stay here to embrace me now," either to pay thine homage to me, or Vol. II.

to confirm thy faith; both which thou wilt have other opportunities of doing; for I am not yet withdrawn from your world, and ascended to the heavenly court of my Father, as you may imagine, I should presently do; but I shall vet continue for a little while upon the earth, and give you further opportunities of seeing me again: let nothing therefore now detain thee any longer, but go immediately to my dear brethren, for whom I have still the same affectionate regard as ever, and say unto them, "I am risen from the dead," and after I have paid some visits to you, am shortly indeed to ascend into heaven. from whence I came; yet grieve not at that separation, but remember, that as I am going to him who is in a very peculiar sense my Father, so I shall still be mindful of your interest, and am also going to your Father, and to my God, and your God; for such he is now become, through that covenant which he has established with you in me: on the whole therefore, you have infinitely greater reason to rejoice than to mourn. And upon saying this, he immediately disappeared for the present; and the other women, advancing to the sepulchre, where the angels continued, received the news of his resurrection from them, and were directed, as Mary Magdalene also was, to report it to the disciples.

The same day on which Jesus arose, one of his disciples named Cleophas or Alpheus, was travelling to Emmaus, a village about seven miles distant from Jerusalem, in company with another disciple whose name is not mentioned. The two were in the utmost dejection on account of their Master's death, insomuch that their grief appeared visible in their countenances,\* moreover as they went along, they talked of the things that sat heaviest on their spirits. "And while they communed together, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them."—He overtook them as coming himself from Jerusalem. "But their eyes were holden that they should not know him: they were held by his miraculous power; or they mistook him by reason of his appearing.

<sup>\*</sup> Countenances. Luke xxiv. 17, &c.

to them in an unusual dress. By the alteration which Jesus could easily make in the tone of his voice, while speaking, and by his new dress, he might be concealed from them, especially as they still believed he was dead, and had no expectation of his resurrection. Jesus therefore spake to them in the character of a stranger, making free, as travellers might do with one another, to ask what the subject of their conversation was, and why they looked so sad? Cleophas was surprised that any one who had come from Jerusalem should have been ignorant of the extraordinary things which had lately happened there. " And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him." Having thus given an account of Christ's character, miracles, and sufferings, Cleophas was so ingenuous as to acknowledge, that they once believed him to be the deliverer of Israel, and in that faith had been his disciples; but that they began now to think themselves mistaken, because he had been dead three days. Cleophas added, that some women of their acquaintance, who had been that morning at the sepulchre, astonished them with the news of his resurrection, affirming that they had seen a vision of angels, which told them he was alive. "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken? Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" From this reproof it would appear, that Cleophas and his companion were of the number of those who gave little credit to the tidings which the women had brought of their Master's resurrection. crucifixion and death, as they themselves acknowledged, having almost convinced them that he was not the Messiah, they had little faith in his resurrection. Wherefore, to shew them their error, Jesus reproved them sharply for not understanding and believing the prophecies, which, said he, declare it to be the decree of heaven, that before Messiah enters into his glory, that is, before he receives his kingdom, he must suffer such things as

you say your Master has suffered. Moreover, that his reproof might appear well-founded, that their drooping spirits might be supported, and that they might be prepared for the discovery he was about to make of himself, he explained the types and prophecies of the Old Testament which relate to Messiah's sufferings; such as the Mosaical sacrifices, and the lifting up of the brazen serpent, Psalm xxii. Isaiah liii. &c. Thus did Jesus demonstrate to his desponding disciples, from the Scriptures, that their despair was without cause, and the suspicion without foundation, which they had taken up of his being a deceiver, because the priests had put him to death. His discourse made a deep impression on them, and engrossed their attention to such a degree, that they neither thought of the length of the journey, nor considered the countenance of him who spake to them; so that, ere they were aware, they arrived at the village whither they went. And now the disciples turned aside from the road, to go to their lodging, Jesus in the mean time travelling on. But they, loth to part with a person whose conversation charmed them so much, begged him to go no farther, but to abide with them, because the day was far spent. By their hearty invitations, the disciples prevailed with their fellow-traveller to turn in with them; and their humanity met with an abundant recompence, for Jesus made himself known to them at table, in the action of giving God thanks for their food. " And their eves were opened, and they knew him: and he vanished out of their sight."

As soon as Jesus departed, the two disciples made all the haste they could to Jerusalem, that they might have the pleasure of acquainting their brethren with the agreeable news. But they were in some measure prevented. For immediately on their arrival, the eleven, with the women, accosted them, giving them the news of their Master's resurrection, immediately exclaiming, "The Lord

is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon!"

While the disciples from Emmaus were giving their brethren an account of the Lord's appearing to them, and offering arguments to convince those who doubted the truth of it, Jesus himself came in, and put an end to

their debate by shewing them his hands and feet. "And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them." The expression, IN IT MISTOR AUTEN, signifies that he stood among them, without intimating whether they saw him come forward, or did not observe him till he was near them. John however mentions a circumstance, which, compared with Luke's account, seems to prove that they saw him enter the room and come forward. "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, " Peace be unto you," John xx. 19. "But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit," Luke xxiv. 37. The disciples had secured the doors of the house by locks and bolts, as well as they could, for fear of the Jews. But Jesus, before he entered, opened the locks and drew the bolts by his miraculous power, without the knowledge of any in the house. Wherefore, as the whole company knew that the doors had been secured, it was no wonder that they supposed they saw a spectre, and were exceedingly affrighted, when something in a human form, whose features they could not easily discern by the evening light, entered the room. Thus the circumstance of the doors being shut is very happily mentioned by John, because it suggests the reason why the disciples took Jesus for a spirit, as Luke tells us, notwithstanding the greatest part of them believed he was risen, and were conversing about his resurrection at that very instant. To dispel their fears and doubts, Jesus came forward, spake to them, and shewed them his hands and feet, desiring them to handle him, and be convinced by the united report of their senses, that it was he. And he said unto them, "Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken; he shewed them his hands and his feet, and his side." Luke xxiv. 38, 39, 40. The disciples beholding these infallible proofs of their Master's resurrection, received him with exultation and rapture. But their joy and wonder so wrought upon their minds, that some of them, sensible of the commotion they were in, suspended their belief till they had considered the matter more calmly. Jesus, therefore, knowing their thoughts, called for meat, and did eat with them, to prove more fully the certain truth of his resurrection from the dead, and the reality of his presence with them on this occasion. "And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them," Luke xxiv. 41, 42, 43. He tarried so long with them, that they had time to make ready some fish for supper, which he took a share of. "Then said Jesu's unto them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you," John xx. 21. I send you to preach the gospel, and teach men the way of salvation, for which purpose I honour you with an authority and commission from God, and bestow on you power to confirm your doctrine and mission by miracles. "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Luke, xxiv. ver. 35, informs us, that the disciples from Emmaus told their brethren on this occasion what things were done in the way. Among the rest, no doubt they repeated the interpretations which Jesus gave of the prophecies concerning his own sufferings and death. But such a sense of the Scriptures being diametrically opposite to the notions which the Jews in general entertained, a peculiar illumination of the Spirit was necessary to enable the apostles to discern it. This illumination they now received from Jesus, who, in token that he bestowed it, breathed upon them, and bade them receive it. The effect of this illumination was, that by perceiving the agreeableness of the things which had befallen him with the ancient prophecies concerning Messiah, their minds were quieted, and they were fitted to judge of the present appearance, and of the other appearances which Jesus was to make before his ascension. Farther, the expression, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," may have a relation not only to the illumination of the Spirit which they now received, but to those which they were to re-

ceive afterwards, and in greater measure. Accordingly it is added, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ve retain, they are retained." This may refer to the temporal pardon and punishment of men's sins. Or the meaning may be, Ye are soon to receive the Holy Ghost in the fulness of his communications, whereby you shall understand the will of God for men's salvation in the most comprehensive manner, and so be qualified to declare the only terms on which men's sins are to be pardoned. Some indeed carry the matter higher, supposing that this is the power of what they call authoritative absolution. Yet the only foundation on which the apostles themselves could glaim such a power, must either have been the gift of discerning spirits, which they enjoyed after the effusion of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. xii. 10, and by which they knew the secret thoughts of men's hearts, consequently the reality of their repentance; or it must have been some infallible communication of the will of God concerning men's future state that was made to them. For, properly speaking, they neither forgave nor retained sins, they only declared a matter of fact infallibly made known to them by God. In the mean time, to render this interpretation feasible, the general expressions, "Whose soever sins ye remit, &c." must be very much limited, since it was but a single individual here and there, whose condition in the life to come can be supposed to have been made known to the apostles by revelation. "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, that is, the twin, was not with them when Jesus came," John xx. 24. It is said, Luke xxiv. 33, that the disciples from Emmaus told their story to the eleven, and to them that were with them. The eleven was the name by which the apostles went after the death of Judas, whether they were precisely that number or fewer. Wherefore we are under no necessity, from this name, of supposing that Thomas was present when the disciples came in. We are sure that he was not present in this meeting, when Jesus shewed himself. Yet, if Luke's expression is thought to imply that Thomas was with his brethren at the arrival of the disciples, we may suppose that he was one of those who

would not believe, (Mark xvi. 13.) and that he went away before they had finished their relation. The other disciples therefore said unto him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, except I have the fullest evidence, arising from the testimony of my own seeing and feeling him, I will not believe that he is risen."

Thus ended the transactions of the day on which our Lord arose from the dead; a day much to be remembered by men throughout all generations, because it brought fully into act the conceptions which had lodged in the breast of infinite wisdom from eternity, even those thoughts of love and mercy on which the salvation of the world depended. Christians therefore have the highest reason to solemnize this day with gladness each returning week, by ceasing from labour, and giving themselves up to holy meditations and other exercises of devotion. The redemption of mankind, which they commemorate thereon in its finishing stroke, affords matter for eternal thought, being such a subject as no other, how great soever, can equal; and whose lustre neither length of time nor frequent reviewing can ever diminish. For as by often beholding the sun, we do not find him less glorious or luminous than before, so this benefit which we celebrate after so many ages, is as fresh and beautiful as ever, and will continue to be so, flourishing in the memories of all reasonable beings through the endless revolutions of eter-

Eight days after his resurrection our Lord shewed himself again to the eleven, while Thomas was with them. "Afterward he appeared unto the eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief, and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen."\* It was Thomas whom Jesus now upbraided, as is evident from the more full account which John has given us of this affair. For, con-

<sup>\*</sup> Risen. Mark xvi. 14.

descending to bear with the stubbornness of his unbelieving apostles, he desired Thomas in particular to put his finger into the print of the nails, and to thrust his hand into his side, that he might convince himself by the only proofs which he had declared should convince him. Thus Jesus demonstrated, not only that he was risen, but that he was possessed of divine knowledge, being conscious of the thoughts and actions of men. Accordingly Thomas, exceedingly struck with the proof, cried out in great amazement, \* " My Lord, and my God!" Jesus said unto him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed:" thou hast believed my resurrection, because thou hast had it confirmed to the by they united testimony of all thy senses; they are persons of a better disposition, who, without the evidence of sense, are so candid as to yield to the proofs which the divine wisdom has thought sufficient for convincing the world.

Our Lord having, first by the angels, and then in person, ordered his disciples to go home to Galilee, with a promise that they should see him there, it is reasonable to think that they would depart as soon as possible. Wherefore, when they were come to their respective homes, they followed their occupations as usual; and particularly the apostles, who pursued their old trade of fishing on the lake. Here, as they were plying their nets one morning early, Jesus shewed himself to them, but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus, for it was somewhat dark, and they were at a distance from him.† He

<sup>\*</sup> Amazement. O rugios  $\mu s$ , xat à  $\Im \cos \mu s$ , "My Lord and my God." Though the nominative often occurs for the vocative, it is the former case that is used here, the words  $\sigma u$  et being understood. To this the context agrees, for we are told that these words were addressed to Jesus. "Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God." Wherefore they cannot be taken merely as an exclamation of surprise, which is the Socinian gloss; but their meaning is, Thou art really he whom I lately followed as my Lord, and I acknowledge thee to be possessed of infinite knowledge, and worship thee as my God.

<sup>+</sup> Him. John xxi. 1, &c.

They answered, they had got nothing. He desired them to let down their nets on the right side of the boat. The disciples, imagining that he might be acquainted with the places proper for fishing, did as he directed them, and caught a multitude of fishes. Such marvellous success, after having toiled all the preceding night to no purpose, could not fail to make them form various conjectures about the stranger who had given them the happy advice. Some could not tell who he was; others said he was the Lord. Simon Peter, who was of this latter opinion, entertaining no doubt of it, girt on his fisher's coat, and cast himself into the sea. Wherefore he leaped out hastily, and walked as fast as he could to the land, which

was only about sixty paces off.

When the disciples came ashore, they found a fire burning, on which there was a fish broiling. At hand also was some bread. But neither being sufficient for the company, or perhaps to show them the reality of the miracle, by making them attend to the number and largeness of the fish which they had caught, and to the nets not being broken, Jesus bade them bring some of their own, then invited them to dine, that is, to eat with him.\* By this time they were all so fully convinced that it was the Lord, that none of them durst ask who he It is not said indeed that Jesus now ate with them; but his invitation to them implies it. Thus Jesus proved to his disciples anew the reality of his resurrection, not only by eating with them, but by working a miracle like that which, at the beginning of his ministry, had made such an impression upon them as disposed them to be his constant followers. So, when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?—more than thy brethren apostles love me?" in allusion to the high professions of love and fidelity which Peter had formerly made to him.

<sup>\*</sup> Him. For the Greek word appearant, signifies sometimes to take meat in the morning, which is the meaning of it here.

saith unto him, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." Being taught modesty and diffidence by his late fall, Peter would not now compare himself with others, but humbly appealed to his Master's omniscience for the sincerity of his regard to him. Upon this, Jesus first desired him to feed his lambs, that is, to exhort and comfort the young and tender part of the flock, those who were to be converted. Then, to give him an opportunity of renewing his professions, "he saith unto him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? and he said unto him, Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, "Feed my sheep."\* From our Lord's asking Peter if he loved him, before he gave him commission to feed his lambs and his sheep, it is justly inferred, that to render men duly qualified for the ministerial function, they must prefer the interest and honour of Christ to every other consideration whatever. Moreover, the repetition of this commission three times, may have been in allusion to Peter's three denials. In it the Papists would have us to believe, that supreme dominion over the whole church, clergy as well as laity, was granted to Peter. However it has a quite different meaning; for Peter, by his late cowardice and perfidy, having as it were abdicated the apostleship, was hereby no more than formally restored to his office, through the indulgence of his kind and merciful Master.

And now the time approached when Jesus was to shew himself publicly in Galilee. This was the most remarkable of all his appearances. He promised it to the apostles before his death.† The angels who attended at his resurrection spake of it to the women who came to the sepulchre, and represented it as promised to them also.‡

<sup>\*</sup> Sheep. John xxi. 16. † Death. Matt. xxvi. 32. ‡ Also. Mark xvi. 7.

Nay, Jesus himself, after his resurrection, desired the company of women to tell his brethren to go into Galilee, where they should see him; as if the appearances he was to make that day, and on the eighth day thereafter, were of small importance in comparison. Moreover, the place where he was to appear in Galilee was mentioned by him.\* Whether there were more present at this appearance than the eleven, the evangelist does not say; nevertheless, the circumstances of the case direct us to believe that it had many witnesses. This appearance was known before-hand; the place where it was to happen was pointed out by Jesus himself. The report therefore of his being to appear must have spread abroad, and brought many to the place at the appointed time. In short, it is reasonable to think that most of the disciples now enjoyed the happiness of beholding personally their Master raised from the dead. What confirms this supposition is, that St. Paul says expressly, Jesus, after his resurrection, was seen of above five hundred brethren at one time. "After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep." + For the number of the witnesses mentioned by St. Paul agrees better to the appearance on the mountain in Galilee described by Matthew, than to any other. Galilee having been the principal scene of Christ's ministry, the greatest part of his followers lived there; for which reason he chose to make what may be called his most solemn and public appearance after his resurrection, on a mountain in that country; an appearance to which a ge-

<sup>\*</sup> Him. So Matthew informs us, xxviii. 16. "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them."

<sup>+</sup> Asleep. 1 Cor. xv. 6.

<sup>†</sup> Ministry. The greatest part of his followers lived there. To this agrees the particular, mentioned Acts i. 15, namely, that the number of the disciples met at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, about a week after our Lord's ascension, were only one hundred and twenty. In Jerusalem and the country about he had few followers, his disciples being mostly Galileans.

neral meeting of all his disciples was summoned, not only by the angels who attended his resurrection, but by our Lord himself the very day on which he arose. Probably at this appearance the apostles received orders to return to Jerusalem.\* Besides, he ascended from the mount of Olives, as we shall see immediately. Wherefore, if the orders for the apostles to repair to Jerusalem were not given at this appearance, Jesus must have shewed himself again, which indeed is not impossible; as it is evident from 1 Cor. xv. 7, that he shewed himself somewhere to the apostle James alone, though none of the evangelists have given the least hint of that appearance. After that (viz. his appearance to the five hundred brethren) he was seen of James. In the college of the apostles there were two persons of this name: one the brother of John, who was killed by Herod, another the brother or cousin of Jesus. Perhaps it was to James the brother of John that our Lord appeared after his resurrection. His being to suffer martyrdom so early, might make this special favour necessary.

Thus Jesus "shewed himself alive (to the apostles whom he had chosen, and to his other disciples) after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."† It seems he continued on earth forty days after he arose, and in the several interviews which he had with his disciples during that period, he gave them many infallible proofs of his resurrection, and discoursed to them concerning the new dispensation of religion which he was going to erect in the world by their ministry; and so having accomplished all the purposes of his coming, nothing remained but that he should ascend into heaven in the presence of his apostles. These men were now gone up to Jerusalem to prepare themselves for the feast of Pentecost. Thither Jesus went, and shewed

<sup>\*</sup> Jerusalem. For from Acts i. 3—12, compared with Luke xxiv. 50, \* is plain that our Lord's discourses, before his ascension, related Mark xvi. 15, and Luke xxiv. 44, were delivered in or near to the city.

<sup>+</sup> God. Acts i. 3.

himself to them for the last time. And because they were still in deep dejection on account of the afflictions of his life and the ignominy of his death, he on this memorable occasion introduced that subject; putting them in mind, that during his abode with them in Galilee, he had often told them that all the things written in the law, the prophets, and Psalms, concerning him, were to be fulfilled. By the operation of his Spirit he removed their prejudices, cleared their doubts, enlarged their memories, strengthened their judgments, and enabled them to discern the true meaning of the Scriptures. Having thus qualified them for receiving the truth, he assured them that Moses and the prophets had foretold the Messiah was to suffer in the very manner he had suffered; that he was to rise from the dead on the third day as he had done; that repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in his name among all nations, beginning with the Jews, and that the first offers of these blessings were to be made to such of them as dwelt in Jerusalem. Then he told them, that in him they had beheld the exact accomplishment of all the prophecies concerning the sufferings and resurrection of the Messiah, and that they were chosen by God as the witnesses of these things, in order that they might certify them to the world. Withal, to fit them for this great and important work, he told them he would send upon them miraculous gifts of the Spirit, which he called "the promise of the Father," because God had promised them by the prophets. At the same time he commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem till they had received those gifts.

Having thus spoken, he led them out of the town to the mount of Olives; and being come to that part of the mountain which was above Bethany, the apostles, whose minds were still full of a temporal monarchy, asked him if he would now restore the kingdom to Israel. His answer was, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power:" it will not be of any use to you in your work, to know the times or the seasons of the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. Besides, this is one of the things which the Father has thought fit to conceal from

mortals in the abyss of his own omniscience. This only is of importance to you to know, that you shall receive miraculous powers after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and that by these powers you shall bear witness unto me with great success, not only in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, but to the uttermost parts of the earth. Moreover he told them, that he was now raised to the government of heaven and earth; for which reason they might go courageously through the whole world, and preach the gospel to every reasonable creature, well assured, that affairs in all countries should be so ordered as to dispose the inhabitants for the reception of the gospel. "All power is given me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, (Mark, xvi. 15, Preach the gospel to every creature)." Withal, those who believed in consequence of their preaching, he appointed to be received into his church by the rite of baptism, and be taught to obey all the precepts he had enjoined them: "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."\* Such baptized believers, he assured them, should receive the pardon of their sins, together with eternal life; but those who did not believe and obey the gospel when preached to them, should be damned.† And to encourage them in the great and difficult work which he now assigned to them, he promised that while they were employed in it, he would be with them and their successors in the ministry to the end of the world, to guide them by his counsel, to assist them by his Spirit, and to protect them by his providence. Finally, that those who through their preaching were induced to believe, should themselves work most astonishing miracles; a circumstance which should contribute greatly towards the spreading of the gospel. When he had spoken these things, he lift up his hands and blessed them, and in the action of blessing them, he was parted from them in open day-light, perhaps about mid-day, a bright cloud

<sup>\*</sup> Yoy. Matt. xxviii. 18.

receiving him out of their sight, that is, covering him about, and carrying him into heaven, not suddenly, but at leisure, that they might behold him departing, and see the proof of his having come down from heaven, which he had promised them. "And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel:" two angels stood by them, who, though they had assumed the form and garb of men, were, by the majesty and splendor of their appearance, known of the apostles to be angels. For as Christ's resurrection had been honoured with the appearance of angels, it was natural to think that his ascension into heaven would be so likewise. Which also said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" (It seems they looked up stedfastly after he was gone out of sight, expecting, perhaps, to see him come down again immediately.) "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven:" he shall come in the same glorious manner in which you have now seen him ascend. The angels spake of his coming to judge the world at the last day, a description of which Jesus in his life-time had given. It was on this occasion probably, that our Lord's body was changed,\* acquiring the glories of immortality, perhaps in the view of the disciples, who looked at their Master all the time he was mounting. As he ascended up into the skies, the flaming cloud which surrounded him, leaving a track of light behind it, marked his passage through the air, but gradually lost its magnitude in the eyes of them who stood below, till soaring high, he and it vanished out of their sight; for he was received up where the Deity manifests

<sup>\*</sup> Changed. For flesh and blood, such as he arose with, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Accordingly the body which he now has, is called a glorious body, and declared to be of the same nature with that which the saints shall have after their resurrection. Phil. iii. 21, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Wherefore, though the Scripture is silent as to the time when this change passed upon Christ's body, we must suppose that it happened either immediately before his ascension, or in the time of it, or soon after it.

himself in a peculiar manner. "And sat on the right hand of God:"\* that is, in his human nature was advanced in dignity next to the Divine Majesty; all power in heaven and earth being given him. And this universal government he will hold, till he fully establishes the dominion of righteousness, when he will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all.

In this illustrious manner did the Saviour depart, after having finished the grand work which he came down upon earth to execute; a work which God himself, in the remotest eternity, contemplated with pleasure; which angels anciently, and superior natures, with joy descried as to happen, and which through all eternity to come shall, at periods the most immensely distant from the time of its execution, be looked back upon with inexpressible delight by every inhabitant of heaven. For though the little affairs of time may vanish altogether and be lost, when they are removed far back by the endless progression of duration, this object is such, that no distance however great can lessen it.

The apostles having seen their Master ascend into heaven, were fully convinced of his having come down thence, and of his being the Messiah. This persuasion they testified by paying him divine honours. "And they worshipped him." His ascension, therefore, gave the apostles great joy, and the more so, that in all probability they did not consider it as their Master's final parting with them. For we may reasonably suppose they understood what the angels said unto them concerning his return, not of his return to judge the world at the last day, but of his return to restore and take upon himself the kingdom of Israel, an event which they would expect to happen very soon.

After the apostles returned to the city, they spent the greatest part of their time in the temple, praising and blessing God, as for all his benefits, so in particular for

<sup>\*</sup> God. Mark xvi. 19.

<sup>†</sup> Him. Luke xxiv. 52.

the resurrection of their Master from the dead, for his glorious ascension into heaven, and for the promise that was made them concerning his return. The apostles, about eight days after this, received the Holy Ghost according to their Master's promise.

Thus endeth the history of the life of Christ; a life the greatest and best that ever was led by man, or ever was the subject of any history. The human character of Jesus, as it results from the accounts which the evangelists have given of him, for they have not formally drawn it, is entirely different from that of all other men whatsoever. For whereas they have the selfish passions deeply rooted in their breasts, and are influenced by them in almost every thing they do, Jesus was so entirely free from them, that the narrowest scrutiny cannot furnish one single action in the whole course of his life, wherein he consulted his own interest only. The happiness of others was what he had chiefly at heart. And while his contemporaries followed, some one kind of occupation, some another, Jesus had no other business but that of promoting the welfare of men. "He went about doing good." He did not wait till he was solicited, but sought opportunities of conferring benefits on such as stood in need of them, and always "reckoned it more blessed to give than to receive;" in which respect he differed exceedingly from the rest of mankind, and was much more like to God than to man. In the next place, whereas it is common even for persons of the most exalted faculties, on the one hand to be elated with success and applause, and on the other to be dejected with great disappointments, it was not so with Jesus. He was never more courageous than when he met with the greatest opposition and the worst treatment, nor more humble than when men fell down and worshipped him. He came into the world inspired with the grandest purpose that ever was formed, even that of saving, not a single nation, but THE WHOLE WORLD; and in the execution of it went - through the longest and heaviest train of labours that ever was sustained; and that with a constancy of resolu-

tion, on which no disadvantageous impression could be made by any accident whatsoever. Calumny, threatenings, opposition, bad success, with the other evils befalling him, served only to quicken his endeavours in this glorious enterprise, which he pursued unweariedly till he finished it by his death. In the third place, whereas most men are prone to retaliate the injuries that are done them, and all seem to take a satisfaction in complaining of the cruelties of those who oppress them, the whole of Christ's behaviour breathed nothing but meekness, patience, and forgiveness even to his bitterest enemies, and in the midst of extreme sufferings. The words, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," uttered by him when his enemies were nailing him to the cross, fitly expressed the temper which he maintained through the course of his life, even when assaulted with the heaviest provocations. The truth is, on no occasion did he ever signify the least resentment by speech or by action, nor indeed any emotion of mind, whatever, except such as flowed from pity and charity, consequently such only as expressed the deepest concern for the welfare of mankind. To conclude, the greatest and best men have had failings which darken the lustre of their virtues, and shew them to have been men. was the case with Noah, Abraham, Moses, Job, Solomon, Paul, and the other heroes celebrated in history. The same thing may be said of all the greatest geniuses in the heathen world, who undertook to instruct and reform mankind; for, omitting the narrowness of their knowledge, and the obscurity with which they spake upon the most important subjects; there was not one of them who did not fall into some gross error or other, which dishonoured his character as a teacher. The accounts we have. in history of the most renowned sages of antiquity, and the writings of the philosophers still remaining, are proofs of this. It was otherwise with Jesus in every respect. For he was superior to all the men that ever lived, both in the sublimity of his doctrine, in the purity of his manners, and in the perfection of his virtues. He "was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from / sinners." Whether you consider him as a teacher or a

man, " he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." His whole life was perfectly free from spot or weakness, at the same time that it was remarkable for the greatest and most extensive exercises of virtue. ver to have committed the least sin in word or in deed, never to have uttered any sentiment that could be found fault with, upon the various topics of religion and morality which were the daily subjects of his discourse, and that through the course of a life filled with action, and led under the observation of many enemies, who had always access to converse with him, and who often came to find fault, is a pitch of perfection plainly above the reach of humanity; and therefore he who possessed it must certainly have been divine. Accordingly, the evidence of this proof being undeniable, both as an argument and as a matter of fact, Jesus himself publicly appealed to it, before all the people in the temple. "Which of you convinceth (or rather convicteth) me of sin?" And if in affirming that I am perfectly free from sin, "I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?"

Such was the person who is the subject of the evangelical history. If the reader, by viewing his life, doctrine, and miracles, as they are presented to him united in one series, has obtained a clearer notion of these things than before, or discerns a beauty in his actions thus linked together, which taken separately does not so fully appear; if he feels himself touched with the character of Jesus in general, or with any of his sermons and actions in particular, thus simply delineated in writings whose principal charms are the beauties of truth; above all, if his dying so generously for men strikes him with admiration, or fills him with joy, in the prospect of that pardon which is thereby purchased for the world—let him seriously consider with himself what improvement he ought to make of

the divine goodness.

Jesus, by his death, has set open the gates of immortality to men, and by his word, Spirit, and example, graciously offers to make them meet for, and conduct them into the inheritance of the saints in light. Wherefore, being born under the dispensation of his gospel, we have, from our earliest years, enjoyed the best means of acquiring

wisdom, virtue, and happiness, and the lineaments of the image of God. We have been called to aspire after an exaltation to the nature and felicity of God, set before mortal eyes in Jesus Christ, to fire us with the noblest ambition. His Gospel teaches us that we are made for eternity, and that our present life is to our after-existence, what childhood is to man's estate. But as in childhood many things are to be learned, many hardships to be endured, many habits to be acquired, and that by a tedious course of exercises, which in themselves though painful, and it may be useless to the child, yet are necessary to fit him for the business and enjoyments of manhood: just so, while we remain in this infancy of human life, things are to be learned, hardships to be endured, and habits to be acquired, by a laborious course of discipline, which, however painful, must cheerfully be undergone, because necessary to fit us for the employments and pleasures of our riper existence above. Our Heavenly Father, ever mindful of us, has sent down Jesus, the express image of his own person, to initiate us into, and carry us through this course of education for eternity. Inflamed therefore with the love of immortality and its joys, Let us submit ourselves to our heavenly Teacher, and learn of him those graces which alone can make life pleasant, death desirable, and fill eternity with ecstatic joys.

These reflections, together with a part of the preceding account of our Lord's sufferings and death, are extracted from Dr. Macknight's Harmony of the Gospels: as it appeared to the editor to afford a more full and circumstantial detail of the particulars of those interesting events than that which was penned by Mr. Howell.

#### THE

### PARABLES OF JESUS,

ARRANGED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER,

#### ACCORDING TO THE REV. T. SCOTT.

Or the Sower,	Capernaum.	Matt. 13, 123
Tares,	Capernaum.	Matt. 13, 2430,
		<b>364</b> 3
Seed springing up impercep-	4	
tibly,	Capernaum.	Mark 4, 2629
Of the Grain of mustard seed,	Capernaum.	Matt. 13, 31, 32
Leaven,	Capernaum.	Matt. 13, 33
Found treasure,	Capernaum.	Matt. 13, 44
Precious pearl	Capernaum.	Matt. 13, 45, 46
Gospel net,	Capernaum.	Matt. 13, 4750
Two debtors,	Capernaum.	Luke 7, 36,50
Unmerciful servant,	Capernaum.	Matt. 18, 2335
Good Samaritan,	Near Jericho.	Luke 10, 2537
Rich fool,	Galilee.	Luke 12, 1621
Servants who waited for their		
lord,	Galilee.	Luke 12, 3548
Of the Barren fig-tree,	Galilee.	Luke 13, 69
Lost sheep,	Galilee.	Luke 15, 37
Lost piece of money,	Galilee.	Luke 15, 810
Prodigal son,	Galilee.	Luke 15, 1132
Dishonest steward,	Galilee.	Luke 16, 112
Rich man and Lazarus,	Galilee.	Luke 16, 1931
Unjust judge,	Peræa.	Luke 18, 18
Pharisee and publican,	Peræa.	Luke 18, 914
Labourers in the vineyard, .	Peræa.	Matt. 20, 116
Pounds	Jericho.	Luke 19, 1227
Two sons,	Jerusalem.	Matt. 21, 28, 32
Vineyard,	Jerusalem.	Matt. 21, 3346
Marriage feast,	Jerusalem.	Matt. 22, 114
Ten virgins,	Jerusalem.	Matt. 25, 113
Talents,	Jerusalem.	Matt. 25, 1430
Sheep and the goats,	Jerusalem.	Matt. 25, 8146
1.	•	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,

#### THE

### DISCOURSES OF JESUS,

ARRANGED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER,

## ACCORDING TO THE REV. T. SCOTT.

CONVERSATION with Nicodemus,	at Jerusalem.	John 3, 121
Conversation with the woman of Sa-		
maria,	Sychar.	John 4. 142
Discourse in the synagogue of Naza-		
reth,	Nazareth.	Luke 4, 1631
Sermon upon the Mount,	Nazareth.	Matt. vvii
Instructions to the Apostles,	Galilee.	Matt. x
Denunciations against Chorazin, &c.	Galilee.	Mait. 11. 2024
Discourse on occasion of healing the		
infirm man at Bethesda,	Jerusalem.	John v.
Discourse concerning the disciples		*
plucking ears of corn on the Sabbath,	Judæa.	Matt. 12, 18
Refutation of his working miracles by		
the agency of Beelzebub,	Capernaum.	Matt. 12, 2237
Discourse on the bread of life,	Capernaum.	John vi.
Discourse about internal purity,	Capernaum.	Matt. 15, 120
Discourse against giving or taking of-		
fence, and concerning forgiveness		
of injuries,	Capernaum.	Matt. xviii.
Discourse at the feast of tabernacles,	Jerusalem.	John vii.
Discourse on occasion of the woman		
taken in adultery,	Jerusalem.	John 8, 111
Discourse concerning the sheep,	Jerusalem.	John x.
Denunciations against the Scribes and		
Pharisees,	Peræa.	Luke 11, 2936
Discourse concerning humility and		
prudence,	Galilee.	Luke 14, 714
Directions how to attain heaven,	Peræa.	Matt. 19, 1630
Discourse concerning his sufferings, .	Jerusalem.	Matt. 20, 1719
Denunciations against the Pharisees,	Jerusalem.	Matt. xxiii.
Prediction of the destruction of Jeru-	•	
salem,	Jerusalem.	Matt. xxiv.
The consolatory discourse,	Jerusalem.	John xivxvii,
Discourse as he went to Gethsemane,	Jerusalem.	Matt. 26, 3136
Discourse to the disciples before his		
ascension,	Ierusalem.	Matt. 28, 1620

#### COMPLETE

## HISTORY

OF THE

# Holy Bible.

BOOK THE TENTH.

The History of the first Planting of Christianity, taken from the Acts of the Apostles.

When it pleased God to visit the world with the light of the glorious gospel, the nations in general were sunk into an amazing degree of vice and wickedness; and that which contributed greatly to this was their profound ignorance of the true God, and their stupid and abominable idolatries.

The nation of Israel also, which retained the most just notions of the Deity, and had a standing revelation of his will, were fallen into great corruptions, relying chiefly on their descent from pious ancestors, and upon their observation of religious ceremonies, while the spirit and design of the law were lost sight of, and the scriptures rendered of little effect by their vain traditions.

The heathen sages and philosophers had in vain attempted universal reformation. The priests and poets

rather corrupted than reformed their religion. And the Jewish doctors had, by their false glosses, obscured the light of revelation, and taken away the key of knowledge from the people. And notwithstanding that all the ancient prophets had testified concerning the Messiah, the very things which their eyes beheld in the person and character of Jesus Christ, they rejected him with disdain and embrued their hands in his blood. They had nearly filled up the measure of their iniquities, and were soon to be dispersed among all the nations of the earth.

This then was the season which Divine wisdom chose for the diffusion of the truth, the circumstances of which

are detailed in the following Book.

This history indeed, as written by St. Luke, does not extend to the journies and actions of all the apostles, but records chiefly those of St. Peter and St. Paul, and does not profess to relate the planting of Christianity in other parts of the world which were visited by the other apostles, who, no doubt, extended their evangelical labours to very distant provinces. The Acts chiefly inform us what was done in Judea and Samaria among the Jews resident there, and in other cities of Syria, Asia, &c. among the Jews in their dispersions. It affords us also a delightful specimen of the extension of the gospel to the Gentiles; first to some single families, as to that of Cornelius; and, after the Jews had discovered their obstinate resolution to oppose the apostles, especially because of their preaching to the Gentiles, then to whole cities and countries, professedly "departing to the Gentiles," among whom they were assured of obtaining greater success than they had found among the Jews.

We shall therefore find, in pursuing this part of the Sacred History, first, an account of the effusion of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, whereby the apostles were perfectly qualified to evangelize the nations; immediately after which we have an account of the conversion of several thousands of the Jews. In this part of the work, St. Peter was evidently the leading man; and though the other apostles were no doubt active and laborious, yet little is said of them; because, in telling us

what St. Peter said and did, we have a sufficient specimen

of the preaching and actions of the whole body.

The next period of this history relates to the conversion of the "devout Gentiles," who were probably "Proselytes of the gate;" and here also St. Peter was honoured to lead the way, as in the conversion of Cornelius and his company. But after the sacred historian has informed us that believers were admitted into the Christian church without being first circumcised; and that, after St. Peter had led the way, other Christians imitated his example, and made numerous converts among the Gentiles also, then the history of St. Peter is naturally dropped, because it does not appear that he ever preached to the idolatrous heathen.

As therefore, the third grand period contains a brief account of the conversion of idolatrous Gentiles, in which St. Paul appears as eminent an instrument, as St. Peter had been among the Jews, the history of that great apostle of the Gentiles is pursued, whose convert, very probably, St. Luke was, and certainly his fellow-labourer in the great undertaking, and concerned in many of the transactions which he himself has recorded.

As the greater part of the world consisted of idolatrous heathen, and the greatest number of Christians, ever since that time have been of that description, this part of the history was very properly most enlarged upon; for the doctrine which is suited to their circumstances, is of the

greatest and most extensive advantage.

But, after we have a full account of the great numbers of the Gentiles being converted from heathenism and received into the professing church, without submitting to the law of Moses; together with the general behaviour of the Jews on that occasion; and a sufficient specimen given of the doctrines preached, and their powerful effects on men's hearts, as also of the persecutions of St. Paul and his companions, St. Luke closes his history, though it appears that he himself accompanied St. Paul long after, and could probably have brought down the history to the martyrdom of that great apostle.

That St. Luke was the author of the book called the Acts of the Apostles, is sufficiently evident. It com-

mences tims: "The former Treatise I have made, O Theophilus, of all things that Jesus began to do, and to teach," &c. This "former treatise" is undoubtedly the gospel which was written by St. Luke, and dedicated by him to Theophilus; and that the "Acts" was written by the same person is allowed by all antiquity. St. Paul calls him "the beloved physician," (Col. iv. 14,) and speaks of him as "his fellow-labourer," (Philem. v. 24.) He appears to have been with him at Rome, when he wrote his Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon; and when he wrote his second Epistle to Timothy, (2 Tim. iv. 11,) and so continued an associate with the apostle in several of his journies, and in his dangerous voyage to Rome.

Dr. Benson, in his appendix to his "History of the Plantation of Christianity," has cited a number of passages from Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement, Origen, Euschius, &c. which prove the genuineness of this book, and ascribe it to the pen of St. Luke. Mr. Briscoe, at Boyle's Lecture, has also shewn in a convincing manner, how capable these early writers were of judging in this matter, and how universally it was admitted by Christians of the first ages as a sacred book. How incontestibly it demonstrates, the Truth of Christianity, will appear to every attentive and unprejudiced reader.

This history affords a strong confirmation of the truths contained in the Gospels. The promises there recorded, are here accomplished, particularly the great promise of the Holy Spirit. The commission which was granted to the apostles is here executed, and the powers with which they were invested is exerted in numerous miracles. The proofs of Christ's resurrection, with which the Gospels concluded, are in this history abundantly corroborated, not only by the undaunted testimony of those who conversed with him after he rose, but by the supernatural operations of the Holy Spirit with that testimony, for the conversion of multitudes to the faith of Christ.

Our Saviour had assured them that they should be "Witnesses" for him, and here we find them continually bearing witness to their Divine Master. They were assured that they should become "Fishers of Men;" and

here we perceive them inclosing multitudes in the gospelnet; they were to be made "Lights of the world;" accordingly we find whole nations enlightened by them. Our Lord had honestly informed them that they would meet with bitter persecution in their work; here we find his predictions punctually accomplished. Thus the latter part of the Sacred History exactly accords with the word of Christ in the former; and thus they mutually illustrate and confirm each other.

This history is exceedingly important in another point of view. We are Christians. Here then we see what Christianity is, and what it requires. We clearly perceive what are the essential truths of our holy religion in what the apostles chiefly insisted upon in their preaching. We see also what is the genuine effect of the truth on the hearts of those who truly receive it by faith. We find the Christian church subsisting in a visible profession of Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, made by his baptized disciples; incorporated into voluntary religious societies, statedly meeting for the worship of God; attending diligently on the apostles' doctrine; uniting in public prayer, and in the frequent reception of the Lord's Supper, under the conduct and presidency of men devoted to the ministry of the word, and in a spiritual communion with "all in every place" who were like-minded. a body has ever since been preserved in the world, notwithstanding the most violent opposition; to this body we now belong, and are to endeavour, as far as possible, to conform ourselves to those rules which were laid down by inspired men of God when this body was first formed.

In a word, we have every inducement, as Christians, to study this history with attention and delight. Men of taste are naturally curious to trace the origin of nations, and mark how they rose to refinement, wealth and power; but the history of the church of Christ must appear to every Christian far more worthy of notice than the rise or fall of empires. "A society, about which Providence has, in all ages, exercised a particular care, presents an interesting object of inquiry. Its history is the history of religion; of the accomplishment of a long series of

prophecies; of the execution of a scheme, to which all other parts of the Divine administration are subservient. The history of the first age of the Christian church is more instructive and engaging than that of any subsequent period. It is splendid because it is miraculous; it is edifying, as it records many noble examples of faith, charity, patience, and zeal; and it arrests the attention and touches the heart, by displaying the triumph of the gospel over the combined malice and wisdom of the world."

THE blessed Saviour of the world having punctually accomplished all things predicted concerning his mission upon earth; and having, in a most solemn and affectionate manner taken leave of his disciples, visibly retires to eternal rest and glory, in the heavenly world. With hearts full of grief and admiration, they lament the loss of the presence of their beloved Lord; and follow him with longing eyes till he totally disappeared. But while they thus fondly looked up towards the place where their Lord was gone, his tender care was immediately displayed by dispatching two of his celestial retinue with a message of consolation. Behold two angels, adorned with the glories of heaven, appeared to them, with this comfortable assurance, "Forbear, O Galileans, your further admiration: your gracious Lord, whom even now you beheld ascending to heaven, shall one day descend again to judge the world in as glorious a manner as he now departed from He hath not absolutely forsaken you, but is gone to take possession of that kingdom which he will govern to the end of the world.

Highly satisfied with this assurance, and the confirmation of their hopes, the glad disciples return from mount Olivet to Jerusalem; where the eleven apostles, with the women who used to attend on Christ, repaired to the temple,\* spending their time in a constant performance of de-

<sup>\*</sup> Temple. The apostles met to perform their devotions in an upper room of the temple, Acts i. 13. For the temple had many chambers or upper rooms in its cir-

votions. And, about a week after, when there was a large company, to the number of an hundred and twenty, assembled together for the worship of God, Peter addressed himself to the disciples in the following manner:

"Ye know brethren, what the royal prophet\* David foretold concerning Judas, who betrayed our Lord, which being from the Spirit of God, must necessarily be fulfilled, and has accordingly been punctually accomplished in Judas, who was of our society, a fellow-disciple, and an apostle in designation as truly as any of us. a sum of money he betrayed his Master to his enemies; after which, being troubled for what he had done, he returned the money to the priests (who durst not put it into the treasury, but bought a field to bury strangers in;) and the sense of this detestable action issuing in black despair, he hanged himself on a tree, but falling down on the ground, his body burst and his bowels fell out. [This fact, and the fate of Judas, is notoriously known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thereupon the field that was bought with that money is vulgarly known by the name of the field of blood.†] To him therefore belongs that which is said by the holy Psalmist, ‡ not by way of execration, but of prediction, that as he should come to a desperate and miserable end, so that office which Christ had given to him, with the rest of the twelve, shall be bestowed on another. It is then our duty, according to this prophecy, to make choice of one of these persons

cuit, which served not only for the use of the priests, and for the keeping of holy things, but some of them stood open for religious meetings.

<sup>\*</sup> Prophet. Psalm xli. 9.

<sup>†</sup> Blood. If the passage, inclosed in brackets, [] be read as a parenthesis, it may be considered as containing, not the words of St. Peter in his speech, but those of St. Luke the historian; for indeed it is not likely that the field should have been purchased so very soon after the death of Judas; much less that this fact was then known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

It has been conjectured that the potter's field was the place in which Judas hanged himself; and if so, this would render its name "the Field of Blood," more striking and emphatical.

<sup>‡</sup> Psalmist. Psalm lxix. 25, and cix. 8.

who are present, and who have continued with us ever since our Lord undertook the charge and care of us, till his assumption to heaven, that he may succeed Judas in

the apostleship."

The whole assembly were pleased with this motion, and unanimously proposed two candidates, leaving it to be decided by lot which of then's should be appointed. The persons nominated were Joseph called Barsabas, sirnamed Justus, and Matthias. Then the apostles solemnly invoked the direction of God on this occasion in this prayer: "O Lord, that knowest the secrets of all hearts, be pleased to direct the lot to him, whom of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take possession of this ministry and apostleship, (from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place;\* that place of misery, which is appointed for impenitent sinners,) and so betake himself to the discharge of it." The lots being drawn, Matthiast was chosen, and was accordingly received to make up the number of the twelve aposties.

The vacancy in the holy college being filled up with this new apostle, they were all met together on the day of Pentecost at the service of God in their accustomed place: where, whilst they were devoutly employed, suddenly they heard a great noise come down from heaven like that of a rushing, violent wind, which shook the very place, and came with such a mighty force that it filled the

<sup>\*</sup> His own place. Some read part of the sentence, Acts i. 25, in a parenthesis thus, "That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, [from which Judas by transgression fell] that he may go to his place," or office; that is, that the person chosen may occupy the place or office of Judas; but this is a very unnatural and forced interpretation of the passage, 1810, 70,000 signifies a place proper and suitable for such a wretch, and therefore by the righteous judgment of God appointed for him. See Matt. xxvi. 24, John vi. 70, 71, and xvii. 12. See also Benson and Whitby on the place.

<sup>†</sup> Matthias. Some have thought that as the names Nathanael and Matthias have the same signification in the Hebrew, that the new apostle was the same person so distinguished by our Lord as "an Israelite indeed;" but there is not sufficient evidence of this.

house where they were assembled: so great was the efficacy of the Spirit of God now descending! and there appeared to them at the same time a number of divided tongues, made as it were of fire; that is, bright flames in a pyramidical form, which were so parted as to terminate in several points, and thereby afford a proper emblem of the marvellous effect attending this appearance, by which they were endowed with a miraculous diversity of languages. And as soon as these lambent flames appeared to touch them, they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in languages which they never understood before.

At the feast of Pentecost, there were at Jerusalem many Jews and Proselytes which came from several nations of all quarters of the world to worship the true God at Jerusalem. When these therefore heard the report of this miracle, they were very much astonished, because, they being of several nations, every one of them heard the apostles and other disciples\* speaking the language of his nation. Their curiosity invites them to an inquiry after the reason of this transaction, saying, "How have these men, who are natives of Galilee, and have lived all their life-time there, acquired this knowledge? For in our own respective languages we hear them preaching the doctrine of Christ, and the wonderful things God hath wrought by him. This certainly must imply something of great moment." But others were of a different opinion, and, in a scoffing manner ridiculing the miracle, said, "This is only the effect of drinking new wine; it is that infuses this faculty in them."

Hereupon the apostles rising from their seats, Peter, as eidest, in the name of the rest makes this defence: "Ye men of Judea, and all that at this time see and hear what the Lord hath done, be assured these things are not the effect of wine: ye know in your consciences

<sup>\*</sup> Disciples. It is probable that each of the hundred and twenty was favoured with this miraculous donation, and not the apostles only: and this best illustrates the prediction of pouring out the Spirit not on God's servants only, but on his bandmaids, Acts i. 18.

it cannot be so, since it is but nine in the morning.\* But this is a completion of a famous prophecyt of Joel, who saith, In the last days I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. All ranks and qualities of men shall receive the effusion of the Spirit of God, and enable those who were never brought up in the schools of the prophets, to go and preach the gospel of Christ in every city. And after that, there shall be fearful and stupendous sights and prodigies, and many great slaughters in Judea, as forerunners and prognostics of the great destruction which shall befal this people for their crucifying Christ, and from which the only way to rescue yourselves is to repent and acknowledge him, which is the design of this miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost. Observe and attend, ye men of Israel, for you are chiefly concerned in this great affair: this Jesus of Nazareth being demonstrated to be sent from God by the mighty works which he did among you, all which you know to be true, being eye-witnesses of them; him, I say, being permitted by God to fall into your hands, you apprehended and barbarously crucified; him, whom God by his determinate council had given to retrieve your lost condition, ye with profane hands have slain. This same Jesus, whom ye thus treated, hath God raised again, delivering him from the power of death; and, besides many other things, the prophecies concerning him necessarily required that he should not lie under death: for of him David t saith, I waited, and looked with assurance on God, for he is my defender, and will not let me miscarry. And for this my tongue shall praise him, and my flesh shall rest confident in him. Nay, though I die, yet shalt thou not leave me in the grave, nor suffer thy Holy ONE to see corruption. Thou hast cheered me, and abundantly refreshed me with thy favour."

<sup>\*</sup> Nine of the clock. This was the time of morning prayers, to which the Jews generally came fasting.

<sup>+</sup> Prophecy. See Joel ii. 28.

<sup>†</sup> David. See Psalm xvi. 8, &c.

"Give me leave, brethren, to speak freely concerning David, who prophesied thus: He died like other men, had a solemn interment, and we have his monument to this day among us, from whence he never rose. therefore he spake not of himself, but, by way of prediction, of the Messiah, knowing that he should infallibly spring from his loins, and that he was to be prince and ruler of his church. And these words of his were prophetic, and literally verified in the resurrection of Jesus, whose soul did not continue so long in a state of separation, as that his body should be corrupted.\* And accordingly God hath raised him up within three days, and all we his apostles are eye-witnesses of it. He being therefore assumed to his regal state and office in heaven, and God having performed to him this promise of giving him power to send the Holy Ghost, he hath now punctually fulfilled his promise to us in sending it on us, in this astonishing manner as you see and hear; one great effect of which you yourselves can testify, for you hear us speaking languages which a short time before we understood not. This great and important truth therefore I now proclaim to you, that God the Father hath raised up that Christ, whom ye Jews have crucified, and by assuming him to his right-hand, hath instated him in the true kingly office of the Messiah."

This speech of Peter's, being accompanied by the mighty energy of the Holy Spirit, so deeply affected the numerous audience, that they were filled with compunction: and as men who were willing to do any thing to rescue themselves from the guilt of so horrible a sin as the murder of the Messiah, they cried out most passionately to Peter and the rest of the apostles, intreating their direction and advice what to do in this case. To this earnest request the apostle Peter immediately acceded, assuring them that through the infinite goodness

<sup>\*</sup> Corrupted. Beza renders the passage, "Thou wilt not leave my corpse in the grave, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption." This frees the passage from all difficulty, and prevents an apparent countenance to the popish doctrine of Christ's visit to hell. The application of the original words, Nephesh and Sheol, in various places, will justify Beza's version.

of God, their case was not desperate. He directs them to repent of their aggravated crime, and in token of their desire to be washed from the guilt of that blood which they had so rashly imprecated upon themselves and their children, to be each of them baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, in order to the forgiveness of that and of all their sins, which he assured them they should certainly obtain, and also receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, whereby they should be qualified to serve and honour that glorious Lord whom they had crucified.

To confirm them in the belief of this, he referred them to the promise of God, (Joel ii. 17, 18,) "which," added he, "is to you, and to your children, whom God is willing to admit to the same privileges with you, and also to extend it to the remotest nations, even to all whom God

shall invite by the preaching of the gospel."

Many other discourses were, no doubt, uttered by St. Peter and the rest of the apostles,\* urging them with the most affectionate importunity to renounce that obstinate unbelief in which they had united with those who crucified Christ, and then avoid the ruin which would quickly come upon that depraved and perverse generation.

Such was the wonderful effect of these addresses upon those who received the word with readiness, that there were added to the number of the disciples, that very day, three thousand souls. Nor was this a transport of sudden passion, but it was evidently the work of God on their hearts, whereby a thorough change was effected; for, notwithstanding all the efforts of their adversaries, and all the danger to which these converts exposed themselves, they continued stedfast in their attendance on the word which the apostles preached, and resolutely adhered to their doctrine: and though many came from distant parts of the world, they continued for a time in Jerusalem, to

<sup>\*</sup> Apostles: It is highly probable that, as a variety of tongues were given, all the apostles, and perhaps some of the other disciples, addressed themselves to different auditories, for the concourse of people was too great to meet in one place, or hear the voice of one man.

be more perfectly instructed in the Christian faith; they all lived in the most endearing fellowship and intimate friendship with each other, and particularly expressed their mutual affection in breaking of bread together, and joining in the exercise of social prayer. And so surprising was this spectacle, that many who were not converted, when they took notice of this wonderful effect of the apostle's preaching, were mightily impressed with the thought of it; so that a reverential dread fell upon every soul, which was farther increased by many miracles which were wrought in the name of Jesus. Such also was the strong affection that prevailed among them, that they had all things common, and the wealthy, in order to supply the wants of the poor, sold their possessions and effects, and divided their produce among the necessitous. And then with unanimity of heart they frequented the temple daily at the hours of prayer, and as frequently as they could, made entertainment for their brethren, especially for the strangers, and partook of their ordinary refreshment with the greatest joy and simplicity of heart, filled with gratitude to God for the riches of his grace towards them, and being, in general, much respected among the people, on account of their amiable and benevolent conduct: And the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom they had devoted themselves, added daily to the church considerable numbers of those happy souls who were saved from the approaching destruction, and from the future punishment to which they would otherwise have been exposed by it.

Shortly after the miraculous conversion of the three thousand, Peter and John went up together to the temple, at three in the afternoon, which was one of the times of day generally set apart for prayer. And as they entered in at the gate of the temple toward the east in Solomon's porch, which was called the Beautiful Gate,\* there lay an impotent man, that had been lame

<sup>\*</sup> Beautiful Gate. This was erected by Herod the Great; it is said to have been about forty-five feet high, and twenty-two feet broad, made of Corinthian brass, and exceedingly splendid.

from his birth, and who used to beg the alms of those that daily came to pray there. The cripple seeing Peter and John going into the temple, begs their charity: the apostles stop at the importunity of the man; and looking earnestly on him, Peter bids the cripple look on them. The poor man, expecting pecuniary relief, earnestly fixed his eyes on the apostles, who, under the divine impulse, intending a far more valuable favour, said to him, "The alms thou requirest I have not to give, but that which exceeds the worth of silver and gold, and will eminently supply thy wants I freely bestow on thee: In the name of Jesus of Nazareth\* rise up and walk." And taking him by the hand he helped him up, and immediately he was cured of his lameness, being able to stand and walk. Upon this miraculous cure, the poor man, now no longer a cripple, entered with the apostles into the temple, to demonstrate the miracle, and to praise God for the instruments of his cure. Having many years sat an object of charity there, he must of course be well known of all pious people who used to go that way, who seeing him walking and praising God, were amazed at the greatness of the cure. The rumour of this soon spread abroad, and as the poor man thus healed kept close to Peter and John, being unwilling to part with those from whom he had received so great a benefit, the people in great numbers crowded about the apostles, to whom Peter thus addressed himself:

"Men of Israel, why do you look upon this cure as a thing strange? (The miracles of Jesus were far greater than this.) Or why do ye attribute any thing to us in this matter, as if there were any excellency in us to which this cure were to be imputed? The God of our fathers hath given this power of working miracles to Jesus, whom you delivered to Pilate to be crucified, releasing a known murderer and thief, and putting to

<sup>\*</sup> Nazareth. We shall have frequent occasion in the course of this history to observe, that this name of reproach by which our Saviour was distinguished, was adopted both by himself and his apostles; for Jesus was not born in Nazareth, as the Jews pretended, but at Bethlehem.

death him, who came to bring life to the world; whom God hath pleased to raise from the dead, and make us witnesses thereof. And now it is by faith in him that this man hath recovered from his lameness. The man you know, having for many years seen him a begging cripple. And this faith working by his power on whom we believe, hath wrought this remarkable cure, at which you all so much wonder. Now this, I suppose, brethren, that you of the multitude, which did thus reject Christ, did not know him to be the Messiah, and the same I suppose of your rulers. But by these means, the many prophecies of Scripture, that the Messiah should be put to death, have been fulfilled. Repent, therefore, of your iniquities, and turn to God, that you may be delivered from the heavy burden of your guilt, that seasons of refreshment and delight may come upon you, and that so, at length, he may send unto you Jesus Christ, whom the heavens, to which he has ascended, must retain, till the happy times of the restitution of all things at the great day shall arrive; when the seeming irregularities of the present dispensation shall all be rectified, according to the predictions of these events by all the holy prophets. For Moses, one of the first, and chief of all the prophets, plainly described the Messiah of whom I speak, and all his successors have foretold these eventful days. the peculiar persons of whom the prophets foretold, and to whom the covenant belongs, which was made to Abraham, in which was promised that the posterity of him should be so blessed, that all the families and people of the world, that would bless themselves or others, should use this form, "God bless them, as he blessed Abraham's Seed." This was upon the account of having Christ given them, besides many other special prerogatives bestowed on them. This accordingly is performed and accomplished. For God having raised this Christ again, hath, by our preaching his resurrection, first to you, sent him again in a most glorious manner to bless his enemies, to do to them all the good offices imaginable, by tenderness and charity to work upon his most obdurate crucifiers, and to turn every one of you from your infidelity and impenitence."

Whilst Peter was instructing the people, the captain of the guard that sat at the porches of the temple, to keep the peace, at the instigation of the Sadducees, came with an armed force, and seized the two apostles, and led them to prison; notwithstanding which, so great was the power and efficacy of Peter's preaching, that five thousand more converts were added to the church and faith of Christ.\*

The two apostles being confined all night, the next morning they of whom the Sanhedrim consisted, and particularly Annas and Caiaphas assembling in council, caused Peter and John to be brought before them, whom they examined upon these interrogatories: How they were enabled to perform the miracle on the lame man? Whose name they invoked? and From whom they pretended to have commission thus to preach to the people? In answer to these questions, Peter being by the Spirit of God endued with an extraordinary presence of mind, and elocution, spake thus, "Ye rulers of the people and elders of Israel, we are this day examined before you concerning an action, which is so far from being criminal, that it is an act of special mercy. Be assured, that this miraculous cure performed on the lame man, was wrought by no other means than by invoking the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, and God most miraculously raised again. This is he that was prophesied of under the title of a stone refused, rejected by you, the chief of the Jews, and treated with contempt, but is now by his resurrection enthroned in power (an effect of which is this miracle wrought in his name) and is indeed become the ruler and king of the church, the prime foundation-stone of the whole fabric. In him alone must salvation now be hoped for by all; for there is no other name under heaven, given out by God among the children of men, whether of patriarch or prophet, or priest, or king, in which we can be saved or recovered."

<sup>\*</sup> Christ. It may be doubted whether five thousand beside the three thousand before mentioned were now converted, or whether the latter made five thousand together with the former.

When the court saw with what courage and freedom of speech the apostles behaved themselves, and considering that their education had not thus elevated them above the capacity of other men, being neither skilled in the learning of the Jews, nor as men of distinction among them, instructed in their laws, they were amazed at it; but considering they were some of those that attended on Jesus in his life-time, and observing the man on whom they had wrought the miraculous cure, stand with them and ready to attest it; though they were as maliciously affected towards them, as envy could make them, yet having nothing to object against the fact, either as it respected the man that was cured, or the apostles that performed the cure, they thought fit in this difficulty to consult by themselves what expedient to make use of; and therefore commanding the apostles to withdraw, they entered upon this debate, demanding of one another how they should proceed in this case. "As to the men we have nothing to accuse them of: For, that they have performed a great miracle is apparent to all men, and we cannot deny it; and the man that was healed is a living witness: since therefore they are guilty of no breach of our laws, to prevent their further seducing the people, who are too apt to be led away by them, we will call them in, and forbid them upon severe penalties to preach Christ and his gospel any more." Thus they decreed; and accordingly sending for them, commanded them not to speak privately, or teach publicly, any thing concerning the faith of Christ. But the christian heroes, whose commission was from a higher power than any on earth, slighting this interdict, and all their threats, declared, that they were commanded by God to do their duty, and that in all reason God must be obeyed before any temporal magistrate; in which they appealed to the Sanhedrim, plainly telling them, that they should not desist from doing their duty, but openly testify those important truths of Christ, so peculiarly made known to them, that they might proclaim them to others, and which none could more fairly attest than themselves, who had been eye and ear-witnesses of them. The court not knowing what else to say to them, being unable to deny their arguments, they added more

threatenings, if possible, to terrify them; and so dismissed them, having nothing to lay to their charge, but the curing the lame man in the name of Jesus; and for this all the people looked on them with reverence and esteem, and counted it an act of God's immediate and infinite mercy; for which they, that were the instruments of it, ought to be blessed, not punished by them, and therefore they durst

not punish or censure them for it.

The two apostles being dismissed, returned with joy to their companions, who with infinite satisfaction heard the report of all that had passed, and unanimously glorified God, who by his holy prophet David\* had foretold what was now come to pass, that the Jews should oppose Christ, say false things of him, deny and crucify him first, and, when God had raised him from the dead, oppose the preaching of him; that the princes and governors, Herod and Pontius Pilate, should combine against him, and the rulers should in council consult against him, the Messiah that God had sent; for it is a certain truth, that Herod and Pontius Pilate gathered themselves together with the Gentiles and people of Israel against his holy Son Jesus, whom he had anointed to do whatsoever his power and wisdom determined to be done. † And now, O Lord, behold their threatenings, and enable us thy servants powerfully to preach thy gospel, and to work miraculous cures on all those, on whom we shall invoke the name of thy holy Son Jesus."

Upon this prayer of the faithful congregation, there came the like wind, as before mentioned, and shook the

<sup>\*</sup> David. See Psal. ii. 1.

<sup>†</sup> Done. Our author adopts the transposition of the original words, as proposed by Limborch; but Dr. Doddridge well observes, that this transposition is arbitrary; he prefers the following sense of the words in his paraphrase. "But it is our unspeakable comfort, to think, that by their utmost rage they cannot break in upon thy schemes, or prevent the efficacy of thy purposes; for they have only been able to do what thine hand had pointed out before, and what thy unerring counsel, to which all future events are obvious, had before determined, that, for wise reasons thou wouldest permit to be done."

See Doddridge on Acts iv. 28.

place where they were assembled; and special gifts of God's Spirit fell upon those that were there present; and this was such a confirmation to them all, that without scruple or fear, they published the gospel of Christ; in a happy concord and union agreeing in the same christian designs, no one of the company laying any particular claim to those necessaries which they had, but by a common right enjoyed them, without difference or distinction. And the apostles continued their ministerial office with vigilance and care, confirming with many miracles their

preaching of Christ's resurrection.

Now that there might be no want of competent provision, those believers, who had estates or goods, brought in plentiful contributions, selling their possessions of lands or houses, gave the price of them to the apostles, who received it of them for the public use, and distributed to every one as necessity required. Among these kind and faithful contributors none was more sincere and ready than Joses the Cypriot, surnamed by the apostles Barnabas; (a true son of consolation) who having a piece of land of his own, (not any part of the Levites' portion, though himself was a Levite) made sale of it, and brought the full price of it, and put it wholly in the power of the apostles, to dispose of, and distribute it as they thought most convenient.

But the great enemy of mankind, seeing the mighty improvement and increase of the church of Christ, and that from a slender semination of the gospel, there was likely to be a vast harvest, scattered the tares of craft and hypocrisy in this blessed field. Among the rest that resorted to these assemblies of the faithful, and contributed to their mutual support, an unhappy pair, Ananias and Sapphira, with joint consent devoted all they had to the use of the church, and to that purpose sold their estate: but they had combined together to keep some part of the money for themselves. Ananias coming first into the presence of the apostles, with great assurance and apparent cheerfulness, produced the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter, who by divine inspiration knew the cheat, in a holy indignation and abhorrence of so vile an act of sacrilege, thus reprehended him. "How,

O Ananias, hath Satan persuaded thee thus to attempt to deceive the Holy Ghost, in purloining part of that which thou hadst consecrated to God's service and the use of his church? Before it was sold, was it not wholly thine? and when it was sold, didst thou not receive the full price for which it was sold? Was it not then in thy power fully to perform thy vow? Upon what motive then hast thou done this? This falsity in concealing the full price is not only an injury to the church, but to God, who knew thy private vow, that it was consecrating the whole, and not this part only which thou hast brought to us." These piercing words of Peter so affected Ananias with despair and the horror of his guilt, that he fell down dead immediately on the spot, to the great astonishment and terror of

all those who were present.

His body being removed in order to be interred, about three hours after this judgment fell on Ananias, his wife Sapphira came into the assembly with the same assurance, not in the least suspecting what had happened to her sacrilegious husband. Peter examining her, whether the sum which they brought was the full sum for which the field was sold? She answered, It was. Whereupon Peter, with the same spirit of holy indignation, thus pronounces sentence against her. "How durst you both combine to provoke God, to try whether he will punish this your impious fraud, or not? That thou mayest see how highly God resents your sacrilegious intentions, behold the men are coming in, which have buried thy husband, and they shall forthwith carry thee out also, and lay thee in the same grave." She no sooner hears her doom pronounced, but it is executed; for she immediately fell down dead at his feet; and the same officers that buried her husband, carry her out from the assembly, and lay her by him. This judgment upon these sacrilegious wretches, not only affected the believers with fear and reverence, but all others to whom it was related.\*

<sup>\*</sup> Related. This miracle served to vindicate the honour of the blessed Spirit, so notoriously affronted by this attempt to impose on the persons who had received his miraculous gifts, and tended effectually to deter dishonest persons

Many other stupendous signs and wonders were wrought among the people in the most public manner, by the hands of the apostles, who continued in the strictest fellowship with the whole company of believers, and frequently met together in Solomon's Porch; and none of those who were not sincerely converted to christianity, presumed to join himself to them; but all the people entertained a high veneration for the apostles as persons owned of God in the most signal manner. And though the death of these unhappy offenders prevented hypocritical persons from joining them, yet the success of the gospel was promoted, for vast numbers of both sexes believed their testimony, and were united to the church. And they were further animated to boldness in their profession, by the numerous miracles of mercy, which succeeded this work of terror, insomuch that as they passed the public streets, the people brought out the sick and laid them at their doors on beds and couches, that, at least, the shadow of Peter as he was going by, might overshadow some or other of them, and this extraordinary faith was rewarded by the healing of many in such circumstances. Nor were these miraculous transactions confined to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but the neighbouring cities shared in the benefit, the people from all the parts adjacent bringing their diseased and possessed patients to these heavenly physicians, who answered their expectations in affording present relief.

The fame of these wonderful performances of the apostles again reaching the ears of the Sanhedrim (most of them being of the sect of the Sadducees) they were highly incensed, and resolved at once to suppress these strange doings. In order to which they apprehended the apostles, and imprisoned them in the common gaol. But the malice of their enemies could not long detain them in any place of confinement; for in the night a heavenly messenger brought them a discharge, telling them, it was the

from joining the christians for the sake of filthy lucre; it afforded also a strong confirmation of the truth of that religion which the apostles were now establishing, just as the death of Nadab and Abihu, confirmed the Mosaic institution. (Levit. x. 1.)

will of their Almighty defender, that they should not fear to do their duty, but go into the temple, and there preach the doctrine of their Lord and Master. In obedience to the Divine message and direction, early in the morning they repaired to the temple, and there expounded the Scriptures, and taught the doctrine of Christ as the Saviour of mankind.

In the mean time the members of the Sanhedrim thinking the apostles had been in safe custody, went to the court, and sent their officers to bring them before them. But when the officers came to the prison, and found no person in it, they returned with great surprise, telling those that sent them; "That they found the prison-doors shut, and the guard carefully watching without, but that

the prisoners were not there."

When the Sanhedrim of the Jews, and the captain that set the guard, heard this, they were strangely perplexed, and wondered how it could be, that the prison being shut, and the guard at the doors, the prisoners should escape; suspecting this must presage some strange thing. But while they laboured under this perplexity, a messenger came into court, and assured them, "That the men, whom they last night committed to prison, were standing

in the temple, and instructing the people."

Hereupon, the captain of the guard, taking officers with him, went immediately to the temple, and persuaded the apostles to go with him to the council, not daring to offer any violence, for fear the people should stone them. Being set before the council, the High-Priest charged them with contumacy, saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to publish this doctrine of Christ, nor teach in his name? And yet in contempt of our authority, ye have published it in the temple to all the city, and endeavoured as much as in you lies, by laying his blood to our charge, to raise a mutiny against us, as his murderers." To this charge the apostles made the same defence as before, "To us, who were commanded by God himself to publish the gospel, your interdict is of no force. When God releases us from prison, where you confined us, and commands us to go into the temple, and preach the faith of Christ, we are obliged to

render obedience to him, and not to your decrees. The God of Israel, acknowledged by us all, hath sent the Messiah into the world with his special commission, whom when ye had crucified as a malefactor, God raised from death, took him into heaven, and invested him with regal power, from thence to send the Spirit of his Father, (which was not to descend till he was ascended) and by that means to give you Jews place for repentance, that if ye will yet come in, and believe on him, ye may receive the pardon of your sins. The truth of this we now testify, and so doth the Holy Ghost, that came down upon us, and the rest that have consorted with us, and is communicated by us to all that believe and pay obedience to him."

This answer of the apostles being a just reproach upon the Sanhedrim, stung them to the heart, insomuch that by a speedy sentence they resolved to silence them; and therefore they entered into a consultation how to put them to death. But Gamaliel,\* a learned doctor of the law, and of great reputation among the people, seeing the desperate inclination of the Sanhedrim, endeavoured to divert them from this dangerous expedient, and ordering the apostles to withdraw, addressed himself thus to the "I advise you to be cautious, O men of Israel, in what you do to these men. For we have examples of persons, who have gathered followers, and raised seditions among the people, but have come to nothing. for instance, Theudas, that undertook to be a general, boasting that he was sent by God to that purpose, and so got four hundred men to follow him, soon miscarried, for himself was killed, and all his adherents put to flight. After him rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, who drew a mighty concourse of people after him, but he soon perished, and all his followers were dispersed. advise you therefore not to be hasty in your proceedings against these men, but rather dismiss them; for the doc-

<sup>\*</sup> Gamaliel. This was a man so highly esteemed by the Jews, that it was said, "the honour of the law failed with him." He was the tutor of the apostle Paul (Acts xxii. 3,) who could not but have learned this event from his master, and which rendered his persecution of the christians the more aggravated.

trine which they preach is either from God, or not. If it be not from God, it will without our opposition come to nothing; the certain fate of false prophets: but if it be from God, you may be sure you will not be able to prevail against it, for all your obstinate opposition and enterprises will be flying in God's face, and striving against

the eternal decrees of his providence."

The council, unable to elude the force of what Gamaliel had said, yielded for the present, admitting that his advice was safe and wise. Then calling for the apostles into court again, they ordered them to be scourged (a very reproachful punishment) and charging them not to preach the faith of Christ any more, they released them. But this punishment was matter of joy and comfort to the apostles, that they were advanced to such a degree of honour and blessedness, as to be scourged for preaching Christ. After this they were constantly in the temple or in some house, instructing those that had already received the faith, or preaching it to those that had not.

And now the number of Christians daily increasing, the Jews that understood Greek,\* and used the Greek scriptures in their congregation, complained of unequal and partial dealing; that there was little care taken of their widows, in proportion to the Hebrews in the daily distribution or provision that was made for the poor. Then the twelve apostles, calling the church together, said thus; "It is not reasonable that we should neglect the preaching of the gospel, and undertake the care of look-

<sup>\*</sup> Greek. The title of Greek does not only signify those who are Greeks by birth, or who speak Greek, but also in general all idolaters, in opposition to the Jews, who only worshipped the true God. For which reason, to avoid ambiguity, the true signification of it should be determined according to the persons and circumstances, where it is employed. As when St. Mark calls the woman, whose daughter had an unclean spirit, a Greek, Mark vii. 26, for she could not be a Greek hy nation, since it is expressly observed, that she was a Syrian, and since Syria was at a great distance from Greece; the same amendment must be made, Rom. i. 16, Gal. iii. 28, and here Acts vi. 1, and ix. 29, where mention is made of the Greeks, we must translate, "The Jews that spoke Greek."

ing after the poor. Therefore, brethren, do you nominate to us seven men, who have approved themselves to be faithful and trusty persons among you, eminent for wisdom and other good gifts, that we may appoint them to the office of deacons in the church, and entrust with the care of distributing to the necessitous, out of the public stock; and by these means we shall be less interrupted in our daily employment of praying and preaching the gospel." This proposal pleased the whole assembly, and they immediately put it in execution, nominating seven, the first of whom was Stephen, a very worthy person, richly instructed in the doctrine of Christ, and full of the Holy Ghost; the other six were Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas. These seven, the disciples presented to the twelve apostles, who by prayer and imposition of hands ordained them to the office of deacons. Then the faith of Christ was propagated, and a very great number of men in Jerusalem associated with the apostles, every day more and more, and many of the Jewish priests received the Gospel thus preached by the apostles.

Of the seven deacons thus ordained, Stephen was the first and most eminent in the exercise of his holy function, and was raised by Divine Providence to the superior honors of an Evangelist and a Martyr, and was enabled in a very extraordinary manner, to confirm the doctrine he taught by many miraculous operations. And as he was preaching the faith of Christ, some men of that synagogue which was called by the name of Libertines,\* and of those that dwelt in Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia and Asia, opposed and contradicted Stephen. But he expressed himself with so much knowledge and strength of argument, that they were totally unable to cope with him or defend themselves against his irresistible arguments. They were therefore so much irritated that

<sup>\*</sup> Libertines. These were the sons of them, who being Jews had been made free denizens by the Romans, or were born of Jewish parents in cities which had those privileges under the Romans, such as Tarsus, where Paul was born, who was very active in this business. See Acts vii. 28.

they had recourse to a most mean and dishonest fraud, for they suborned false witnesses to swear against him and accuse him to the Sanhedrim, that they had heard him speak dishonourably of the Jewish religion. Having thus incensed the whole city against Stephen, they caused him to be apprehended and carried before the Sanhedrim; and their witnesses being produced, they charged him with foretelling destruction to the temple, and threatening the change of all the Mosaical rites and ceremonies. the charge was read against him, the judges and all that were present in the Sanhedrim, as they looked on him, saw a great splendor about him, like the countenance of an angel.\* The chief priest having heard the accusation, asked him whether he was guilty of thus predicting the destruction of the temple, and change of the Jewish religion? In answer to whom he makes this defence:

"Men, brethren and fathers, I beseech you observe. The eternal God of heaven and earth appeared to our father Abraham, whilst he was in Mesopotamia, the place of his birth, commanding him to remove from thence, by reason of the idolatries and other vices which had crept in among the people. In obedience to the divine command he forsook his father's house and his kindred, and taking his father with him, he travelled into Canaan, there he pitched his tent, and built an altar; where he gave him no settlement for the present, (he being soon after obliged to remove into Egypt, and sojourn there) but there he received God's promise, that his posterity should inherit and possess the whole land, though at the time of this promise he had no child, nor any seeming prospect of issue or inheritance. However, God confirmed this promise to him with these concurring circumstances; that his posterity should first live in Canaan, and after that go down into Egypt, where they should be oppressed and afflicted, till

<sup>•</sup> Angel. This is, no doubt, a proverbial expression, signifying a peculiar degree of majesty and dignity, arising from a transport of inward joy, in the consciousness of his innocence, the excellence of his cause, and his prospect of glory.

the end of four hundred years\* from the time of Isaac's birth, until the time that the iniquity of the seven nations (all concluded under the general name of Amorites, which inhabited this promised land) should be filled up, and they ready for God's justice to destroy, and their land givenaway from them. And then in the fourth generation from Jacob, when the time of their deliverance from the Egyptian slavery was at hand, God said, I will judge the Egyptians, lay heavy punishments upon them, and make them release thy posterity, who shall come and possess this land, and serve me in it. And in confirmation of this promise, God made a covenant with Abraham, and appointed circumcision as a seal of it, and accordingly Abraham, when Isaac was born, circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat the patriarch Jacob, and Jacob his twelve sons, the heads of the twelve tribes, of which this people consisted. And these sons of Jacob were much displeased with Joseph one of their brethren, and sold him into Egypt, but God protected miraculously, and preserved him, delivering him from prison, and at the same time brought him into great favour with Pharaoh the king of Egypt, who had so great an opinion of his wisdom and justice, that he trusted him with the whole management of his kingdom. Whilst Joseph flourished thus in the favour of this prince, a terrible famine raged in Egypt and Canaan for seven years, and our father Jacob, and his children were in danger of perishing for want of food. But Jacob understanding that there was a magazine of corn reserved in Egypt, sent his sons thither twice to buy corn; and though at first Joseph treated them roughly, yet the second time he discovered himself to be their brother, and introduced them to Pharaoh, by whose order Joseph sent for his father, and brethren, and their children, where, with their families, they lived comfort-

<sup>\*</sup> Four Hundred Years. Many good critics suppose that this is mentioned here (as in Gen. xv. 13,) as a round sum, without taking notice of the broken numbers, the exact time being four hundred and thirty years, Exod. xii. 40, Gal. iii. 17. Those who wish to consider this minutely may consult bishop Patrick on Gen. xv. 13, and Drs. Doddridge and Whitby, on Acts vii. 6.

ably: at length Jacob and his twelve sons died there. Joseph and some of his brethren, being first buried in Egypt, were, at the time of the deliverance of the Israelites from bondage removed to Sichem, and buried in the field bought by Jacob of the children of Hamor; and Jacob was not buried in Egypt, but by his sons carried and buried in the field of Machpelah, bought by Abraham of Ephron, the son of Zohar. But when the four hundred years were nearly expired, after which the performance of the promise made to Abraham's seed was to commence, the people becoming numerous, and another king, that knew not the merits of Joseph, sitting on the throne, our fathers suffered great hardships, the king, to suppress their increase, commanding all their male children to be

put to death."

"In this juncture of time was Moses born, who being a beautiful child \* was first kept close in his father's house three months. But when they could no longer conceal him there, he was put into a cradle of rushes, and laid by the river's brink; but thus left and exposed, the providence of God preserved him: for it was so ordered, that Pharaoh's daughter found him there, and put him to nurse to his own mother, and afterwards educated and brought him up as her adopted son. By these means he was instructed in all the learning of the Egyptians, and became a considerable man among them. And when he was forty years old, God having revealed to him his purpose of delivering the Israelites from their slavery by his hands, and make him their leader, he resolved to visit them: and seeing an Egyptian task-master offering an injury to an Israelite, by which his life was endangered, he interfered in his defence, and mortally wounded the oppressor. This he did as an act of that office to which God had appointed him; and apprehending that the Is-. raelites knew that he was designated to be their deliverer, he killed the Egyptian, as a first essay, or exercise of that

<sup>\*</sup> Beautiful Child. In the original it is Fair to God, or, as we should express it in modern language, divinely fair; it is a kind of Hebraism, which is no more than an emphatical expression, denoting his extraordinary beauty.

office: but in this he was mistaken, for they did not as yet.

discern that God for this purpose had sent him."

"The next day he interposed as a pacifier of controversies among them, to try if they would accept him as a judge, which was another part of the office for which he was designed: but the aggressor in the controversy refused his arbitration, saying, Wilt thou murder me as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday? Moses being thus repulsed, and fearing by what he had already done, that he might be brought into trouble, if it should come to the king's ear, fled from thence to Midian,\* and tarried with Jethro, the priest or prince of the country, whose daugh-

ter he married, and by her had two children."

"At the end of his second forty years, which was also the period of the predicted four hundred years, as Moses was tending his sheep about Horeb, or Sinai, a mount famous afterward for God's delivering the law from its summit, he saw a flame of fire in a bush, but the bush was not consumed by it; and whilst Moses drew near to see the meaning of this phenomenon, the voice of God by his angel spake to him, saying, I am the God of thy Fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. This voice of God was so terrible to him, and the flame that appeared in the bush so glorious and dazzling, that he could not look upon it. Then the same voice commanded him, in reverence to the place, which was in the presence of God, to put off his shoes; adding, I know the oppression of my people, and will certainly relieve them; and therefore commission thee to be their deliverer. So that this Moses, whom they refused to be their judge, to compose their differences, did God make their captain, to bring them out of Egypt, shewing many astonishing miracles before they were delivered from their

<sup>\*</sup> Midian. As Moses had acquired every branch of Egyptian literature, and had also the prospect of the highest preferment, it must have been a peculiar act of self-denial in him to leave the polite court of Egypt and live as a retired shepherd in Arabia. But St. Paul (Heb. xi.) ascribes this to his faith, and as faith has always a reference to a promise, it cannot be doubted, that he had respect to the deliverance he was to effect, as well as to the ultimate " recompence of reward."

slavery, and afterwards rescuing them from the hands of Pharaoh at the Red Sea; and after forty years spent in the wilderness to punish their murmuring, and to shew more of God's power and miraculous preserving and sustaining them there, they were at last by Joshua brought into Canaan."

" Now Moses was all this while but a prophet, foretelling the purpose of God to send another and a greater prophet to you in these days, the Messiah, and warning you to receive and believe on him. This Moses afterwards, when the people were encamped in the wilderness, was called up to mount Sinai, where the law was delivered to him and the Israelites; and after all the miracles wrought by God to give him authority with them, the Israelites murmured and rebelled against him still, and inclined to return to Egypt again, rather than submit to his authority; they also fell into idolatrous practices; for under the pretence that Moses had forsaken them, when he went only up to the mount to receive God's commands for them, they made themselves gods, after the manner of the Egyptians. This provoked Jehovah to forsake them, to leave them to themselves, to permit them to follow their own inclinations, which led them to worship the stars of heaven instead of God; who therefore expostulates with them: Were the sacrifices, which you offered up in the wilderness all those forty years, offered to me, O house of Israel? Nay as the grossest idolatry, ye set up a shrine with the image of one of the Egyptian kings under the title of Mars, and the picture of Saturn (another planet,) denoting another Egyptian god; and these images of false gods ye have worshipped, which idolatry will produce to you a heavy captivity. These fathers of ours, continued Stephen, had the ark of the testimony with them, which was made exactly according to the pattern shewed by God to Moses. This their successors, under the conduct of Joshua, brought with them into Canaan, and so continued till David's time; who, having received special favour from God, earnestly desired to build a temple for his service; but God would not permit him the honour of building it, because he had been a man of war, and had shed much blood; and therefore reserved

it for his son Solomon, who built it in a most sumptuous manner."

And now Stephen, having by this historical relation brought his discourse to the point in hand, he closes it with an application to the present occasion. "But surely, continues he, God doth not so dwell in this temple. (who hath the whole world for his palace) as that he should preserve this for ever from being destroyed, since you, by crucifying his Son, have provoked him to take vengeance on you, for continuing in the rebellions of your fathers: for if David's blood-guiltiness made him incapable of building it, yours will render you unworthy of having it continued to you. For as your fathers persecuted and slew the prophets of old, who foretold the coming of the Messiah, so ye, now he is actually come, have betrayed and murdered him. A sin heightened with the greatest aggravations imaginable, whether we consider the person thus treated by you, or you that used him thus: He, the holiest person in the world, that came to be your Saviour; and you the people of God, the very men, for whose sake the law was delivered from God by the ministry of angels, and by them to you; and yet you have not obeyed it, nor embraced him which came to perfect that law, but absolutely rebelled against it all."

This whole discourse of Stephen's, but especially the close of it, foretelling their destruction for their unbelief, wounded them deeply; but instead of producing contrition, it exasperated them the more, and incensed them against him to such a degree, that they resolved upon his death, with all the expressions of rage and malice. But he, inspired with an holy courage, and far above all fear of their fury, looking up to heaven, saw the appearance of angels before God, and Jesus standing, as in a posture of readiness to assist and help, close by him. This vision so animated him, that he could not forbear proclaiming it to his persecutors, saying, "Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God."\* This so inflamed their cruel zeal,

<sup>\*</sup> God. Some suppose that the heavens were really divided, or rendered transparent, so that the glory of Christ became visible to his bodily eyes; but it is more

that they immediately accused him of blasphemy, and dragged him out of the city to stone him; and they that were the evidences against him, and were according to the law to be his executioners, put off their upper garments to fit themselves for their work, and a young man, named Saul, took the charge of them during this furious assault, Stephen continued invoking his great Lord, and saying, "Lord Jesus receive my Spirit;" and at last concluded in this charitable expression for his enemies and murderers, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

And so saying, he expired.

Saul, who was afterwards so renowned an apostle, was one of those who approved of the stoning of Stephen, and concurred in it. Nor did the storm, which burst out so violently on the protomartyr, cease with his life; the flaming zeal of the Jews, exerting itself with the greatest fury against the professors of the christian faith at Jerusalem; all of whom, except the apostles, dispersed themselves in Judea and Samaria, and preached to the Jews: but the apostles continued in Jerusalem. Stephen being thus crowned with martyrdom, some proselytes that were in the city made a solemn funeral for him, and sincerely lamented his death. As for Saul, he continued a violent persecutor of the faithful, annoying them wherever he found them, and without distinction of age or sex committed them to prison. Wherefore those that had dispersed themselves to avoid persecution, and Saul's zealous rage, retired to a distance; but wherever they wandered, they published the glad tidings of the gospel.

In the number of those scattered disciples, Philip, the deacon, was pre-eminent; who going from Judea to Samaria, preached the gospel at Sebaste, one of its cities; and all people being convinced by the miracles that Philip wrought, were persuaded to receive the faith of Christ; for from many who were possessed, he cast out devils, which, on that occasion, loudly proclaimed the irresis-

rational to suppose, that it was a visionary representation, miraculously impressed on his imagination. So (Dr. Doddridge observes) Ezekiel saw, while he sat in his house at Babylon, the city of Jerusalem. Ezek. viii. 1, 4.

but previous to the preaching and miracles of Philip, there had been in this city one Simon, a magician, who had puzzled and amused the people with his necromantic tricks and performances; and having for a long time imposed on their weakness by these arts, he had acquired the name of Divine.\* But when Philip, by preaching the christian faith, and by the performance of real miracles, had converted many to christianity, they became proselytes to the gospel, and received baptism of him; and even Simon himself, when he professed to give credit to the doctrines he heard, expressed his astonishment at the miracles he beheld, and was actually baptized.

These wonderful proceedings and happy successes of Philip, were soon related to the apostles at Jerusalem; who being desirous that these new converts might be further confirmed in their christian profession, by those extraordinary gifts which inferior officers in the church could not bestow, sent Peter and John unto them, who, though once strongly prejudiced against the Samaritans, cheerfully undertook the journey; and being with them, implored the miraculous powers of the Spirit, which were immediately granted, upon the imposition of the apostles?

hands.

Simon, the magician, seeing those miraculous effects follow the imposition of hands, offered to give the apostles money, if they would convey this powerful gift to him. But Peter, in a holy indignation, resenting this affront offered to the sacred function, refusing his money, told him, "Thy money perish with thee, and thy profane offer of it will call for mischief on thee, for thinking so meanly of this extraordinary privilege, bestowed on us by Christ, which is not to be purchased like earthly commodities with the price of money: thou shalt never have

<sup>\*</sup> Divine. He pretended to be some extraordinary person. Irenæus says, that Simon boasted, he had appeared to the Samaritans as the Father, to the Jews as the Son, and to the Gentiles as the Holy Spirit; and Justin Martyr, says he asserted that all the names of God were to be ascribed to him, and that he was God above all principality, power, and virtue."

these holy things; for thy design, in desiring these gifts, is to advance thy own credit and esteem among men, and not to enlarge the kingdom of Christ. Repent therefore, and humble thyself before God for this wicked and impious proposal, and humbly beseech him to pardon thee; (for it is not impossible that it may yet be obtained) for I perceive that thou art in a condition dangerous to thyself, and hateful to God." Simon being convinced of his wicked error, and affected with the horror of his guilt, implored the prayers of the apostles to God for him, to pardon this wickedness, and to avert those punishments and judgments which they seemed to foretel would fall

upon him.

The apostles having confirmed those in the faith, who were baptized by Philip, returned to Jerusalem, and as they proceeded on their journey, preached the gospel in many other towns and villages of Samaria with much success. But Philip received particular orders from heaven by an angel of God, who commanded him to travel to the south. Philip obeyed the heavenly vision, and being on the way, at a little distance observed a chariot with a splendid retinue, which belonged to and attended on the treasurer of Candace, queen of Ethiopia, who being a\* proselyte to the Jewish religion, had been at Jerusalem to worship the God of Israel. Whilst Philip was looking on, the Spirit of God directed him to go near to the chariot, and speak to him that rode in it. Philip obeyed, and approaching the chariot, heard him reading the prophecy of Isaiah; and asking him whether he understood what he read, the treasurer told him he was at a loss, and desired his instruction: whereupon Philip ascended the chariot. The place of scripture that perplexed the Ethiopian was this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before her shearers he opened not his mouth; in his humiliation his judgment

<sup>\*</sup> Proselyte. A proselyte is one, who being a Gentile by birth and religion, comes over to the Jewish religion in whole, or in part.

was taken away, and who shall declare his generation? for his life was taken from the earth." This text he desired Philip to explain, demanding, whether the prophet spake this of himself, or of some other person? Then Philip began at this text, and from thence preached Jesus to him. Upon which the Ethiopian was converted, and desired to be baptized; and opportunely seeing a pool of water near the road, he instantly pressed Philip to perform that office; who told him he was ready to do it, provided he was sincere: upon which the other replied, "I stedfastly believe these prophecies of the Messias to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and that he is the Son of God." Then both alighted from the chariot and went down to the water, where Philip baptized him; and as soon as they were come up from the water, the Spirit of God took Philip out of sight, and the Ethiopian was left alone; who returning to his chariot, went with joy to his own country; but the angel conveyed Philip to Azotus, who all the way he went preached the gospel till he came to Cæsarea.

Notwithstanding this dispersion of the disciples, persecution still raged against the faithful, wherever they lay in their enemies' way. But none so eminent for zeal and cruelty as Saul, whose sanguinary mind, not satiated with Stephen's death, pushed him on to the utmost severities against the Christians, whom he threatened with nothing less than prisons and death. And to qualify himself the more for the execution of this bloody purpose, he requested the High-priest to enlarge his commission. The Sanhedrim, overjoyed at the forwardness of this furious instrument, immediately dispatch him away with power to seize all Christians, and send them bound to Jerusalem to be tried; Jerusalem being the metropolis of Syria as well as Judea. This commission was highly pleasing to Saul's cruel spirit, who immediately hastens to Damascus to put it in execution; but while he was on the road entertaining himself with the bloody prospect, God, in mercy to him, and those whom he went to persecute, takes him off from his wicked purposes: a bright shining cloud encompassed him, which struck him with great terror, as at the presence of God, who he knew was wont

thus to exhibit himself. This threw him prostrate on the ground, where, as he lay, a sudden clap of thunder invaded his ears, and a voice out of it saving to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" This increased his amazement, and being desirous to know the meaning of this vision, he asks, "Who art thou, Lord?" The voice replied, "I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom thou persecutest; all thy fury can only hurt thyself, but cannot do me any real injury." Saul, perceiving that he whom he had so virulently opposed was indeed a glorious and powerful person, and yet, instead of destroying him, had condescended to expostulate with him, cried out, in the amazement and consternation of his soul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" For he was constrained at once to decline his opposition to Christ, and to resign himself entirely to his disposal. The Lord immediately replied, "Go to Damascus, and there thou shalt know my will." The attendants were struck dumb with fear and amazement, wondering that they should hear a voice, but see no man speaking. Therefore, taking up Saul, they led him to the city, where, in a sort of trance or ecstacy, he continued blind three days, without receiving any sustenance.

At the time of this wonderful transaction, there was at Damascus a certain disciple named Ananias, to whom the Lord, in a vision, gave this charge: "Go into the straight street, and inquire at the house of one Judas for Saul of Tarsus, for I have revealed to him in a vision, that he shall recover his sight by imposition of thy hands." But Ananias, well knowing Saul's furious temper, the fame of which had been too sensibly known in those parts, expostulated with the Lord, for putting him on so dangerous an attempt. But the Lord said, "Obey, for I have chosen him a special instrument for the service of my church, to preach my gospel, not only to the Jews, but to the gentiles: and as fierce as he hath been against the Christian faith, he shall suffer very heavy trials for my sake, labour most abundantly in the propagation of it, and at last lay down his life for it."

Ananias obeyed, and coming to the house where Saul was, he saluted him with this congratulatory speech,

"Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, that appeared to thee on thy way to Damascus, hath commissioned me not only to restore thy sight, but to endow thee with the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, to qualify thee for the service of his church, to which thou art now consecrated." Immediately upon this, Saul recovered his sight; and was, by baptism, received into the number of the faithful; and having taken food after a long abstinence, he was quickly strengthened, and recovered his former health and vigour, which it was his immediate care to employ in the service of his new master. He now associated with the disciples whom he came to persecute; and, in a very short time, began to preach Christ in the synagogues, proving, by incontestable arguments, that he is the true Messiah, the Son of God.

This sudden change of Saul greatly surprised the people of Damascus, who remembering that he had so lately been concerned in the death of Stephen, a violent persecutor of the Christians, and but just before was sent from the Sanhedrim with a special commission to that purpose, could scarcely believe him sincere. But Saul every day increased in spiritual strength, and was soon able to repel all the arguments of the Jews, enforcing his own with such evidence, that they were not able to deny the proofs he gave of Jesus being the Messiah. This Christian courage, and spiritual freedom of Saul, which baffled the Jews in all their disputes, so exasperated them, that they entered into a conspiracy against him, resolving to destroy him; but having timely notice, he prevented their malice by an honest stratagem: for the disciples understanding that the Jews kept a constant guard at the gates of the city, and that it was impossible to convey him from thence by day-light, took the opportunity of the darkness of the night, and let him down the wall in a basket, by which means he escaped to Jerusalem; where, when he offered himself to the conversation of the faithful, they were afraid to associate with him on account of his former character; but Barnabas introducing him to the apostles, vouched for his sincerity, declaring the manner of his miraculous conversion, and that in confirmation of his mission, which he in a special manner had received from the Lord, he had openly preached at Damascus the gospel of Christ. Upon this assurance he was received by the apostles, and employed in the work of his sacred calling, to which, by his Christian courage and great abilities, he was a bright ornament. But here likewise, as before at Damascus, signalizing himself in all disputes with the Jews that understood Greek, they were so enraged at his pious zeal, that they attempted his life; which the brethren understanding, they conveyed him from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, and

thence to Tarsus, the place of his birth.

Now all the Christian assemblies through Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, were indulged with the quiet use of their religion, daily improving and increasing in the faith, and building on that foundation the pure and pious practice of all Christian virtues. And as Peter, at this favourable juncture, was making his progress through all the neighbouring country, to instruct and confirm the new converts in the faith of the gospel, he paid a visit to the disciples at Lydda, where he wrought a miraculous cure upon Æneas, who had been afflicted eight years with the palsy, and was not able to help himself. Upon which miracle, the inhabitants of Lydda and Saron generally received the faith. At this time there was at Joppa a woman who had received the gospel, whose name was Tabitha, or Dorcas, who, by extraordinary industry and labour in her profession and way of employment, was ready to do all good offices of charity and liberality to the necessitous: and thus full of good works, she was taken sick, and died. Having therefore by way of preparation for her interment washed her body, according to their custom of burying, they laid her in an upper room. Now Lydda being near Joppa, the disciples sent messengers to Peter, intreating his presence among them; and when he came to Joppa, they shewed him into the room where Tabitha was laid out, and the poor widows who had been clothed by her christian bounty came weeping to Peter, and shewed him the garments which she either made herself, or caused to be made, as monuments of her charity. Then Peter, ordering the company to withdraw, kneeled down and prayed; and, turning to the body, said, "Tabitha, arise!" Upon which, opening her eyes, she sat up; and Peter giving her his hand helped her up, and presented her alive to her friends that lamented her loss. The fame of this miracle soon spread through the place, and multitudes were thereupon converted to the faith, being no longer able to resist such evidences of the truth of the gospel. To finish this great work therefore, Peter continued some time at Joppa, taking up his residence in

the house of one Simon a tanner.

Upon the borders of Palestine, about seventy miles from Jerusalem, stood the stately city of Cæsarea, where the Romans kept a garrison to awe the conquered Jews, part of which was called the Italian-Cohort, or band of soldiers, commanded by Cornelius, who was a man of distinguished piety, and worshipped the true God, and his family, led by his pious example, did the same; he was also remarkably generous to the poor, and abounded in acts of devotion. And as he was one day, at three in the afternoon, engaged in prayer, he saw an angel, who called him by his name. But when he discerned it to be a message from God, in great fear and astonishment, he said, "Lord, what is thy pleasure?" To which the angel gave this comfortable reply, "Thy prayers and the alms with which they have been attended, are come up into the Divine presence, as a grateful memorial, more pleasing than the most fragrant incense; and he is now about to afford thee a singular token of his favour. Send a message therefore to Joppa, and at the house of one Simon a tanner, near the sea-side, inquire for Simon, whose surname is Peter, who shall instruct thee in the knowledge of the mercy designed thee, and give thee directions for thy whole future life." gel being gone, Cornelius called two of his menial servants, and a pious soldier, one of his domestics, whom, when he had acquainted with the whole matter of the vision, he sent off to Joppa.

The next day, whilst these men were on the road, and not far from Joppa, about noon Peter went up to the flat roof of the house (a place commodious for devotion) to pray; and being hungry, would have eaten; but he

fell into an ecstacy, or a trance,\* and in a vision seemed to see heaven opened, and a great sheet or wrapper, tied at the four corners, which containing all sorts of creatures, clean and unclean, denoting the Jews and Gentiles together, was let down to the earth; and there came a voice to Peter, saying, "Rise, kill and eat!" But Peter refused, thinking himself bound to eat nothing that was forbidden by the law, concerning things clean and unclean. But the voice spoke to him a second time, telling him God had taken away those interdicts concerning meats; and therefore when God makes no distinction, he ought not to make any. After three admonitions, the sheet was taken up into heaven, and Peter was left in great perplexity, seriously considering what could be the meaning of this visionary representation. While he laboured under this doubtful anxiety, the men who were sent from Cornelius were just come to Simon's house, and stood at the gate, inquiring for Peter; at which instant of time it was revealed to Peter by an inward suggestion, that three men inquired for him, and that he must go along with them, making no question upon those Jewish scruples of the unlawfulness of conversing with the

Peter immediately obeyed the heavenly admonition, and went down to the men, demanding the cause of their coming; who tell him, that Cornelius, a pious centurion, and generally well esteemed by the Jews, had seen a vision, and therein was commanded by an angel of God to send for him to come to him, that he might hear something of great moment from him. Then inviting them into the house, he entertained them that night; and the next morning Peter went from Joppa attended with several of the brethren to Cæsarea, where they the next day arrived; and Cornelius, to shew the greater respect to his venerable guest, had invited his kindred and friends to join with him in the reception.

<sup>\*</sup> Trance. The word expans signifies, "the rapture of the mind," when the external senses being suspended, God reveals himself in a peculiar manner to his servants, the prophets or apostles, Acts x. 10, xi. 17.

Peter and his company being arrived at Cæsarea, Cornelius met him at his door, and considering him as an angel sent immediately from heaven, he behaved himself with the greatest humility, falling down at his feet to pay him homage; but Peter would not permit this, telling him, as he raised him from the ground, that himself was no more than a man, though God had employed him on this errand. Then addressing himself to the company, he thus begun: "Ye all know that the laws of the Jewish religion permit not a Jew to converse with any Gentile; but God hath by a vision revealed to me, that I should not make any difference between Jews and Gentiles. Therefore I came to you without scruple, as soon as I was sent for: I desire therefore to know the cause of your sending for me?"

Cornelius, with the greatest frankness and seriousness, answered for the company: "four days since I was fasting until this time of the day, and at three of the clock retiring to prayer, an angel appeared to me in human form, in bright apparel, and said, "Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thy alms recorded in the book of heaven; send therefore to Joppa, and inquire at Simon the tanner's for Peter, who, when he cometh, shall instruct thee what to do." In obedience to the divine decree I sent to thee, and thus far all things in the vision are fulfilled. It now only remains that thou instruct us farther in the will of God; for we are here assembled in his presence, and disposed to hear with becoming reverence and attention all those things which God hath given

thee in charge."

Then Peter, laying aside all personal distinctions and prerogatives, makes the following improvement of the former vision: "I now plainly perceive, and am fully satisfied, whatever my former prejudices were as to the difference between the Jews and the Gentiles, that God, the great Father of the whole human race, is no respecter of persons, and accepts no man merely because he is of such a nation, nor does he mean to confine his favours to the seed of Abraham: the middle wall of partition is broken down, so that proselytes, and pious men of every nation, are equally acceptable to him, and may be freely

admitted to partake of the blessings of the gospel. The doctrine which hath been preached through all Judea, and took its rise from Galilee, just in your neighbourhood, after John's preaching and baptizing, concerning Jesus of Nazareth; is no strange thing to you; how by the testimony of the Holy Ghost descending on him, and by the power of working miracles, God authorized him; and accordingly he hath executed his office, in calling to repentance, curing diseases, and casting out devils, by the power of God, which was present with him. Of all which wonderful things performed by him we are witnesses, and likewise of his crucifixion and resurrection, that grand triumph over death. But this manifestation was not immediately made to all the Jews, but only to his disciples, whom God had inclined to leave all and follow Christ; and as he had chosen them to be witnesses of all that Christ did when he was living, so he ordained them witnesses of his resurrection, giving them the honour of eating and drinking with him after he rose from the dead. And this God hath appointed us to publish, and to proclaim to all the world, that this crucified Christ is raised to God's right hand, to be Judge of all men. This is he, of whom all the prophets foretold, that whosoever believeth in him shall receive the forgiveness of their sins by his name, though their crimes be ever so heinous."

Whilst Peter was thus speaking, the Holy Ghost came down upon the whole audience, and inspired them with his gifts and graces; which was a wonderful confirmation of the preceding visions, and that part of Peter's discourse concerning the removal of the distinction between the Jews and Gentiles. And this more particularly affected the Jews who had received the gospel, who seeing the Holy Ghost equally inspiring this assembly, were convinced, and praised God for this impartial distribution of his mercies. Then Peter, by way of application of what he had before preached, says, "There is no scruple to be made of receiving these to the privileges of the gospel, although they be Gentiles, since God, bythe immediate descent of the Holy Ghost, hath granted them." Upon which they were all baptized in the name of the

Blessed Trinity; Peter, at their earnest request, tarrying some time with them.

Before Peter's return from Cæsarea, the apostles and disciples at Jerusalem had heard that the people of other countries, who were not Jews, had embraced the doctrine of Christ. And at Peter's coming to Jerusalem, the Jewish Christians, who still adhered strictly to the observation of the Mosaical law of circumcision, of abstaining from unclean things, and conversing with men of other nations, accused Peter of too much freedom in conversing with those that were not circumcised, and eating with them, which, according to the law of the Jews, was forbidden. But Peter made his apology by giving them an exact account of the whole proceeding, with the occasion of it: and at last draws this conclusion from it; "Since God hath been pleased to allow these Gentiles the same privileges with us who have been his constant disciples, and since the gift of the Holy Ghost hath been likewise imparted to them, it must in me have been direct disobedience to God, if I had declined receiving them into the church, or refused to preach to and converse with them." With this account of the matter they were perfectly satisfied, and blessed God, who had communicated the same mercy to the Gentiles as to the Jews. But still the disciples, who were dispersed upon the persecution and death of Stephen, preached the gospel to the Jews only.

After this, the apostles being informed of the further progress of the gospel at Antioch, and desirous of confirming them in the faith, sent thither Barnabas, a pious man endued with many excellent gifts, who, being highly delighted with the pleasing effects of the word among them, exhorted them all to adhere to the Lord with full determination of heart. The exhortations of this worthy man were attended with a peculiar blessing; for those who had embraced the gospel were confirmed in the faith, and a considerable number believed, and were received

into the church.

Burnabas having effected his design at Antioch, and wishing for an assistant in his labours, left that place for Tarsus in search of Saul, and finding him there, returned

with him to Antioch, where, for a whole year, they resorted to the place of public assemblies, instructing and confirming all that came. And those that had received the faith of Christ being before called Nazarites or Galileans, were first of all in Antioch styled Christians.\*

About this time, some of the chief men, who possessed the gift of prophecy, came by the appointment of the church at Jerusalem to Antioch; and one of them named Agabus, by revelation from the Spirit of God, foretold that there should shortly be a very great famine through all the adjacent countries; which accordingly came to pass in the reign of the Emperor Claudius; upon which the Christians in all places, according to their ability, resolved to send relief to the Christians in Judea in this time of dearth; and this accordingly they did, forwarding their bounty to the care of the elders of the church at Jerusalem, by the faithful hands of Barnabas and Saul.

About this time, being the forty-third year of Christ, Herod Agrippa, grandson to Herod the Great, having obtained great part of his dominions, and so calling himself by his name, resolved to persecute the Christians, especially the apostles at Jerusalem, merely to gratify the Jews. And in this persecution, James the apostle, the son of Zebedee, was beheaded by Herod's command. † Perceiving that this cruel action was very acceptable to the Jews, whose favour he was fond of conciliating, he was determined to proceed, and therefore apprehended Peter also about the time of the Passover: and having imprisoned him, he set a guard of sixteen soldiers over him, intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the Jews, and, if they approved of it, to put him to death. During Peter's confinement, the church ceased

<sup>\*</sup> Christians. So denominated, as many think, by an intimation from heaven: the name, however, is eminently significative, and should remind all who bear it of the propriety of resembling that holy person from whom they derive it.

<sup>†</sup> Thus was our Lord's prediction concerning him fulfilled, Matt. xx. 23; and thus would the heroic courage of the rost of his ministers be displayed in proceeding with their work, as it would plainly shew that their miraculous powers did not secure them from dying by the sword of their enemies.

not to offer up their constant prayers for his preservation. And the night before Herod intended to bring him to the assembly, to have their suffrage to condemn him, whilst Peter was sleeping, more securely under the protection of heaven than his double chains and guard, an angel descended in a bright cloud, which illuminated the prison, and touching his side, bid him arise. Upon which, awaking, he found his fettered limbs at liberty. Then the angel commands him to dress himself, and follow him. Peter, in some disorder obeyed, not knowing what was really done, but thought he had been in a dream or trance. The prison being in the suburbs, they passed the first and second wards, where watch was kept every night without the gates; and at last they came to the iron-gate that led to the city, which opening to them of its own accord, they passed; and when they had gone through it into the street, the heavenly guide having carried his sacred charge out of danger of the guards, disappeared, leaving Peter alone. By this time Peter was perfectly awake, and considering what had happened, he said to himself, "Now I am satisfied that God hath sent his angel to deliver me from the hands of Herod, and from the expectation of the Jews." And as he was ruminating on his miraculous escape, he came to the house of Mary, a place where many Christians were spending the night in earnest prayer for his deliverance; and God had graciously answered them, for he had discharged the prisoner for whom they were so much concerned. Peter knocking at the door, a damsel, named Rhoda, came to know who it was, and hearing Peter answer, she, overjoyed to hear his voice, ran into the house, and acquainted the company that Peter was at the door. They told her she was mad: but she persisted in her first report. Then they being moved with her constant affirming of it, thereupon concluded, that though Peter himself could not be there, yet there was some \* messen-

<sup>\*</sup> Messenger. The word angel, which, by way of excellence, is put to denote the immortal spirits attending on God, doth primarily, and in the common use, signify a messenger, and from thence only denote those spirits, because they are

ger sent from him, who might mention his name. But whilst they were thus debating among themselves, Peter continued knocking; and when they had let him in, they were exceedingly surprised to see him in person. But lest their joy might discover his escape to the neighbourhood, he beckoned to them with his hand to be silent, whilst he related how wonderfully God had delivered him out of the hands of his enemies. He also bid them go and immediately acquaint James with this good news, that it might be communicated to the rest of the brethren; he then, very prudently, separated from them, and went to a place of greater security, to avoid the search which he knew would of course be made among his friends and acquaintance; and therefore he departed to Cæsarea, where he staid till the noise of his escape was over.

The next morning, as soon as it was day, the soldiers missing their prisoner, were in the utmost confusion, none being able to imagine by what means he could escape; which Herod hearing of, he sent for the guard, and strictly examined them; but they being unable to give any satisfactory account of the matter, and thinking it unsafe to admit any idea of a miraculous interposition in favour of a man whom they had devoted to destruction, ordered them to be immediately led away to execution for their negligence.

At this time there was some misunderstanding between Herod and the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, against whom he was about to declare war. But they, dreading his power, made interest with Blastus, Herod's chamberlain, to intercede for them, and make up the matter; for they could not subsist without his favour. Upon this occasion Herod appointed a day to hear and determine the business; and being dressed in his royal robes, and seated on his throne, he made a speech to them.

messengers of God, employed by him: and consequently, it may signify here no more than a messenger from St. Peter; so it doth Matthew xi. 10, Mark i. 2. Luke vii. 27, &c. And so the angels of the churches were not those immortal spirits, Rev. i. 19, but ministers, the messengers of God to the people.

The fawning crowd thinking to ingratiate themselves, and please the tyrant's pride with flattering applause, rent the sky with their noisy shouts, crying out, "It is the voice of a God, and not of a man." Herod, with secret pride and vanity assumed that praise to himself which belonged only to God; and this blasphemy, added to his bloody persecutions and other sins, rendered him ripe for divine vengeance, which immediately seizing him with inexpressible torment in his bowels, terminated in a speedy mortification, and deprived him of \* life: a just reward for affecting the titles due to God, from the clamorous and undiscerning populace.

This tyrant thus removed, the gospel flourished and increased, new converts being daily added to the faith. Barnabas and Saul, having discharged their trust, in carrying the necessary provision appointed for the relief of the poor Christians at Jerusalem, and other parts of Judea, returned from thence to Antioch, and took along with

them John, whose surname was Mark.†

In the church at Antioch there were several prophets and teachers of eminence; and as they were ministering to the Lord in public, and joined prayer to fasting, the Holy Spirit, by immediate revelation, directed them to appoint Barnabas and Saul to the extraordinary work of preaching the gospel among the Gentiles, for which God had already designed them. In order to this, they appointed a solemn day of fasting and prayer, and by imposition of hands ordained them to the work for which God had appointed them. Having thus received their

<sup>\*</sup> This was the end of Herod Agrippa, grandson of that inhuman tyrant Herod the Great, the destroyer of the infants of Bethlehem: his father Alexander, born of Marianne, was put to death with his brother Aristobulus many years before, by Herod, whose whole posterity was finally exterminated; and Herod Agrippa, who killed James, the Lord's brother, and first bishop of the church of Jerusalem, fell in the manner here related, by the just vengeance of heaven.

<sup>†</sup> Mark. This appears to have been a different person from Mark the Evangelist, who was the convert and companion of Peter. This John Mark was the nephew of Barnabas, who had a great affection for him, and took him with him in several of his journies.

commission from God himself, they set out for Seleucia, and from thence sailed to Cyprus, where, in the city of Salamis, they publicly preached the gospel in the synagogues of the Jews, having Mark with them as their attendant. From Salamis they travelled through the island to Paphos, another city of Cyprus, where the temple of Venus was. Here they met with Barjesus, a magician\* and false prophet, who being intimate with Sergius Paulus, the proconsul, a prudent and virtuous man, who was inclinable to receive the faith, did all he could to divert him from the conversation of these two apostles. Paul,† being in an extraordinary manner under the influence of the Holy Spirit, in a holy rage, fixing his eyes on Barjesus, he thus expressed his abhorrence, "O vile sorcerer! Like the devil, by whom thou workest, thou art an enemy to all goodness; wilt thou persist in defiance of the faith of Christ, which comes armed with a much greater power of miracles than those to which thou falsely pretendest? Thou shalt soon feel the vengeance of heaven upon thyself; for thou that perversely opposest the light of the gospel shalt lose thy sight, which by the immediate power of God shall be taken from thee for a time." And immediately he was struck blind, imploring the aid of some kind hand to lead him. This miraculous act upon the sorcerer convinced the proconsul, and he was converted to the faith.

<sup>\*</sup> Magician. The word elymas, in the Arabian language, signifies knowing and skilful, and is applied to those that know things divine and human. So the word magos, with the Greeks, is the title of their wise men skilled in the secret learning, and whom we originally call Magicians. Others derive this name from the Arabic word alaim, which signifies one acquainted with bidden secrets.

<sup>†</sup> Paul. There are several accounts of Saul's two names. But the most probable of them is that of Origen, in the Preface of the Epistle to the Romans; where he saith, that Saul being a Jew born in a city of the Romans, had at his circumcision two names, Saul a Jewish, and Paul a Roman name. And this is agreeable to the form of speech in Acts xiii. 9, "But Saul, who is also Paul," noting him to have had two names at once, and not to have changed one for the other.

Having performed great things, and converted many, he with his company, except John, who returned to Jerusalem, went by sea from Paphos to Perga in Pamphylia, and from thence to Antioch in Pisidia,\* where, on a sabbath-day, going into a synagogue, they sat down; and after the lessons, one out of the law, the other out of the prophets, it being the custom for the Jewish doctors to expound some part of the scripture for the instruction of the people, the chief persons of the assembly which were present sent to Paul and his companions, to know whether they were disposed to speak to the congregation. Whereupon Paul gladly embracing this opportunity, and beckoning with his hand for silence, thus addressed himself to the congregation: "Attend ye men of Israel, and all you that fear God. It was your God, the God of Israel, that chose Abraham, and promised to bless and multiply his seed, and accordingly performed it, increasing them to a great number, even when they were slaves in a strange land, from which he miraculously delivered them: and for forty years, though they murmured and rebelled against him, he treated them with paternal care, destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan to make room for them. After that, for the space of four hundred years, he gave them a series of judges, by whose heroic interposition, he delivered them from those repeated oppressions and miseries which their frequent revolts to idolatry had brought upon them; this sort of government lasted till Samuel's time, who being a prophet, ruled them in God's name and stead for a time; of whose peaceful government being weary, they desired a king; upon which God gave them Saul the son of Kish, who governed them two and forty years: and when God in his displeasure had removed him, he gave them David to be their king, who, God promised, should rule his people after his own will. From this man's posterity, as he promised, did Jesus descend, appointed by God to

<sup>\*</sup> This is called Antioch in Pisidia, to distinguish it from Antioch in Syria, so frequently mentioned in this history.

be the Saviour of Israel. This is the illustrious person whom God so often promised to send into the world; and John the Baptist having been sent before as his herald, and having preached, to introduce his appearance, the baptism of repentance, declared that he was not the Messiah, but his forerunner, and not worthy to be even his menial servant.

"And now, brethren, this gospel, which Christ brought into the world, is sent to be proclaimed and made known to you. For the Sanhedrim and people of Jerusalem, notwithstanding the prophecies which foretold his coming, the many miracles he wrought, and the good he did among them, adjudged him to death, and so have fulfilled the prophecies concerning him. And though he was perfectly innocent, no just accusation being brought against him, yet by clamours and threatenings they never ceased importuning Pilate till they crucified him. And when they had fulfilled the scripture concerning him, by exerting their malice against him, they took him from the cross, and burying him in a sepulchre, they set a watch to guard it, and prevent his resurrection. But after all their vigilance, God raised him from the dead. Forty days after this he continued upon earth, and was seen several times to converse with his disciples, and others, who from the beginning had attended on him, and who do now testify the truth of all these things to the Jews. And the subject of this gospel, which we preach to you, is the promise made to our fathers, which God hath now fulfilled in raising Jesus from the dead. Of which also that in the second Psalm was a prophecy, when it was said, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." To the same purpose also, that God should not only raise him from the dead, but also secure him never any more to die, are those two other prophecies; one of Isaiah lv. 3, "I will give you the sure mercies of David:" the expression of an everlasting covenant, spoken literally to the people of Israel, that God would perpetuate to them the mercy promised to David, that of giving one of his seed to sit on his throne; but here accommodated to Christ, that though he were crucified, yet he should rise again, and never

die more. And to this most clearly belongs that other prophecy of David, Psalm xvi. 10, "Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Which words cannot be applied personally to David, because he having lived his term of natural life, died, and never rose again, but his body putrified in the earth. But he in whom that prophecy was completely fulfilled, being sent by God into the world, and crucified, and by the power of God raised from the dead, never perished at all, but ascended into heaven. This therefore, brethren, is the message which we bring, the gospel that by him, even by this glorious and exalted person, the remission of sins is published unto you, even the full and assured pardon of all your offences, be they ever so great and aggravated. And by him, every one who believeth in him, is freely and fully acquitted before God, not only from the guilt of smaller miscarriages, but even from the guilt of all those things which are in the highest degree criminal, and for the pardon of which no prevision was made in the Mosaic law. See to it, therefore, I earnestly beseech you, that what is spoken in the prophets as the fatal consequence of rejecting the gospel, come not upon you—particularly what Isaiah says, "Behold! ye despisers, and wonder, and perish! for I perform a most amazing work in your days, even a work which ye shall not believe if any one tell it to you."

Such was the substance of St. Paul's plain and faithful address to the Jews at Antioch, to which, for the present, they made no reply: but while they were going out of the synagogue, the Gentiles, who happened to be present, desired that the apostle would repeat on the next sabbath what he had then delivered, promising to attend them-

selves, and bring their friends with them.

The assembly being broken up, several of the Jews, that believed, and Proselytes, followed Paul and Barnabas, who preached to them, and by way of exhortation confirmed them in the faith of the gospel. The next sabbath the people came in great crowds to hear the apostles. With this expectation then, all that could, came to the synagogue, which having a tumultuous appearance in the eyes of the Jews, they soon discovered their malice, and not only con-

tradicted Paul's preaching, but treated him with ill man-

ners and abusive language.

But these contumelies and reproaches neither affected nor discouraged the christian heroes, who openly declared, that they had now performed their charge by preaching the gospel first to the Jews, before they applied themselves to the Gentile world. "But," added they, "since ye Jews behave yourselves so obstinately and perversely, that you have become utterly unworthy and incapable of any benefit by the gospel, we are now by appointment to leave you, and preach to the Gentiles. For this was the direction of God, that Christ being preached to the Jews first, and being rejected by them, should be preached to all other people of the world; and this is the sum of that ancient prophecy of Isaiah xlix. 6. "Thou shalt be for salvation to the ends of the earth."

When the Gentiles heard, that this pardon of sin and salvation by Christ was allowed to them, they rejoiced, and blessed the name of God for this glorious mercy of his, revealed in the gospel; and as many of those who were present, as were, according to the gracious purpose of God, and by the influence of his grace, prepared for eternal life, openly embraced the gospel: and as these new converts heartily joined with Paul and Barnabas to propagate the truth, the word of the Lord was carried on, as with a mighty torrent, throughout all that region. But the Jews, exasperated at this success, stirred up some women of considerable rank, who applied to the magistrates of the city, exciting them to persecute the preachers of the gospel; in consequence of which they were driven away with violence and injustice. But the apostles seeing their obstinacy, used that fatal ceremony\* appointed by Christ in this case, thereby foretelling the destruction which would soon overtake them, and leaving them in this desperate state, with curses hanging over their heads, they went to Iconium. But all the christians were filled with spiritual joy, and proceeded zealously in the ways of God.

<sup>\*</sup> Ceremony. Shaking off the dust of their feet, Matt. x. 14.

Whilst these two courageous champions of the church preached the gospel at Iconium, in such a powerful and convincing manner, that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks received the faith, the base unbelieving Jews, incensed the unconverted gentiles against the apostles and their converts: yet they tarried some time there, preaching the gospel in their public assemblies, and God added his testimony to what they said, by enabling them to work miracles. But notwithstanding the mighty influence they had over the minds of those that were piously inclined, the Jews had made a great party against them, insomuch, that the multitude were divided, some holding with the Jews, and others with the apostles. But they, to prevent the mischief which so great a concourse of people must necessarily occasion, and to preserve themselves from the danger that threatened them, prudently withdrew from Iconium, and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the country

thereabout; where they preached the gospel.

While they were at Lystra, a very extraordinary event took place. A poor cripple, lame from his birth, being one of the apostle's auditors, was particularly observed by Paul, who looking earnestly upon him, and either by his words, overheard by Paul, or by his own discerning spirit, perceiving that he believed they were able to cure him, Paul speaking to him, loud enough to be heard by the rest of the assembly, said, "Stand upright on thy feet." The poor man, in a dependance on the power of Christ, immediately attempted it, and was so miraculously helped, that he sprung up with astonishing agility, and walked about with the greatest ease. When the people beheld this wonderful cure, they concluded that it could not have been effected but by the immediate presence of a Deity; and therefore running about in great confusion, they exclaimed aloud, "The gods are descended in the likeness of men." And Barnabas being a person of more majestic appearance, they called Jupiter, and Paul, who was a small active man, they named Mercury, the god of eloquence. But as soon as this miracle came to the ears of the priest of Jupiter, who was deemed the tutelar deity of that place, they came to the place where Paul and Barnabas were, bringing oxen crowned with garlands, intending to offer sacrifice to them. But the apostles, abhorring such blasphemy, rent their garments in detestation of it, saying, "Sirs, Why do ye these things? We are but men ourselves, subject to the passions of human nature like you, and are come to convert you from these idolatries, and to persuade you to the service of the living God, who made heaven and earth, and all things therein, who in times past left the Gentiles to their own blind worship, but sufficiently at the same time evidenced himself to them by the great blessings of temporal things, in bestowing fruitful seasons, the particular acts of his power and bounty, to dissuade

them from their impicties.

These arguments, though urged by the apostles with so much vehemence, could scarcely restrain them from sacrificing. But while Paul and Barnabas were labouring for the recovery of these poor idolaters, some unbelieving Jews, who came from Antioch and Iconium, fearing the people should be persuaded to the truth, instigated the giddy multitude to join with them against the apostles, and easily prevailing, they in a tumultuous manner threw stones at them, and Paul falling, they believed they had killed him: in which condition they dragged him out of the city as dead. But as the christians there came to inter his body, he rose up, and went privately with them into the city, and the next day Barnabas and he departed to Derbe, where having preached the gospel, and converted many to the faith, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch; in which places they confirmed the disciples in the faith, and exhorted them to perseverance, telling them that they must suffer many tribulations before they could arrive at heaven. And when they had constituted presbyters for them in every church by fasting and prayer, they took their leave of them, recommending them to the good providence of Christ, whose faith they had received. And after they had passed through Pisidia they came to Pamphylia, and having preached the gospel in Perga, they went to Attalia, and thence came by sea to Antioch, from whence they had, by divine appointment, been solemnly recommended to the grace of God for the work which they had so vigorously prosecuted, and so happily accomplished. And when they had assembled the church, they gave an account of their embassy, how it had pleased God, that by their preaching to the Jews in the Gentile cities, many Gentiles had received the faith. In which place they

abode with the disciples a long time.

And here some converted Jews, who came from Jerusalem, though they believed in Christ, yet thought themselves bound to the observation of the whole Mosaical law, insisted upon it both in public and private, that the Gentile christians must submit to the whole law, and be circumcised, or else they could not be saved. This Paul and Barnabas strenuously opposed, and no small debate was excited. This question being of great importance, the church determined to send Paul, Barnabas, and other brethren to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, to know their sentiments on this grand subject. As they passed through Phenice and Samaria, they told them the occasion of their journey, and all the christians were glad that this question was like to be determined. When they arrived at Jerusalem they were kindly received by the whole church, and declaring the great success God had given to their preaching among the Gentiles, they informed them of their message.

This gave occasion to some of the Pharisees who had obecome christians to rise, and say, that though they heartily rejoiced in the conversion of the heathen, they judged it absolutely necessary to circumcise them, and charge them to observe the whole law of Moses. Others being of a different opinion, a day was fixed for the solemn discussion of this matter in a full assembly. The day appointed being come, the apostles and elders met together to consult on the affair; when, after much debate, Peter arose and thus addressed himself to the au-

dience...

"Men and brethren, it is well known to you all, that some time since God made choice of me to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, particularly to Cornelius and his family: and God who knew the sincerity of their hearts, testified that they were acceptable to him, and fit to be

haptized, bestowing the gift of the Holy Ghost upon them, as he had before upon us, making no distinction between us and them, having purified their hearts as well as ours by true faith. By this one act of God to them, it is plainly and fully determined; why then do ye press this thing so contrary to the will of God, and impose upon the Gentile converts the performance of the Mosaical law, which belonged not to them, and which we Jews were so far from being able to perform, that we could not be justified by it? For through the great merey of God, it is by the gospel we expect salvation and justification, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not by the observation of the Mosaical law. Whence it is plain, that if the Gentiles believe, they have the same way to salvation as we ourselves have."

Then Paul and Barnabas, in confirmation of what Peter had said, declared what miracles God had done by them in the conversion of the Gentiles, which was another testimony from heaven, that no difference ought to be made between the Jews and Gentiles. After they had done speaking, the apostle James, requesting the serious. attention of the council, addressed them to the following effect: "Our beloved brother, Simon, hath sufficiently demonstrated, that it was the will of God (as in the case of Cornelius) that the Gentiles should without scruple have the Gospel preached to them, and be baptized. this is agreeable to what hath been foretold by the prophets, for they are the words of God by Amos [ix. 11, 12.] "In the latter days I will return, and build up the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, and I will build again the ruins thereof, and will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles who call upon my name, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things." Now this prediction is agreeable to the wise plan of the divine government, for all his works are from eternity known unto God. Therefore my conclusion is, "That we should not compel them to be circumcised, who from Gentiles become christians, but content ourselves if they believe. For we that are Jews need not fear, that this will bring a contempt upon Moses or the laws of the Jews, since the contrary appears by the christian practice, for even where these Proselytes of the Gentiles are, the books of Moses are continued among them, being read in the synagogue every sabbath-day, to signify

their respect to the law."

The business being thus determined by the consent of the whole assembly, the next thing was to choose some messengers from Judea, who were present at this council, to go along with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, and they fixed upon Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, men of eminent account among the brethren. These, therefore, they dispatched to Antioch with letters to the following purport: "The apostles, elders, and the whole society of christians in Jerusalem, salute the brethrenwhich are of the Gentiles, in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. We having received an account, that some which went from hence, endeavoured to subvert you, and to lead you to a groundless doctrine of the necessity for all christians being circumcised, they having no instructions from us so to do. We being assembled together, have determined to send two chosen men of our own body, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul; persons, that have in preaching the gospel, behaved themselves with all sincerity, and hazarded their lives for the service of Christ. With these we have sent Judas and Silas, that they may tell you in person and more at large what we write in brief. For we having prayed to God to send his Holy Spirit to abide among us, and lead us into all truth, have determined that the Gentile christians shall not be obliged to circumcision or other judaical observances, or to any more than those few things that have among the Jews been required of all Proselytes\* of the gate; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: which things, if ye shall observe, there will be no more of the Mosaical law required of you; and so we bid you heartily, farewell."

The council having dismissed them, they hastened to

<sup>•</sup> Proselytes. That is of all Gentiles who were in any sort permitted to come into their temple to worship God.

Antioch; where calling the church together, they presented the epistle to them in the presence of the whole congregation: which when they had read, they rejoiced at the approbation expressed by the apostles. And these two brethren, Judas and Silas, being endued with a prophetic spirit, able to expound and interpret the Scriptures, exhorted and confirmed the believers in the faith. And after some stay at Antioch they took their leave, receiving the prayers and thanks of the brethren. But Paul and Barnabas continued at Antioch, instructing them that had received the faith, and declaring it to them that had not.

Some time after this, Paul desired Barnabas to accompany him in visiting those cities where they had before preached, to see how they advanced in the knowledge of To which Barnabas consented, but would have John Mark go with them; which Paul did not approve of, because John Mark had left them, when he went from Pamphylia, and had not accompanied them constantly in preaching the gospel. Upon which Paul and Barnabas parted; Barnabas taking Mark with him, took shipping for Cyprus, and Paul chusing Silas, went to Syria and Cilicia. And while they sojourned at Derbe and Lystra, they met with a certain disciple named Timothy, whose father was a Greek, but his mother an Hebrew. He was in great esteem among the Christians of Lystra and Iconium, and when Paul had conversed with him, he found him to be one that would be highly useful in propagating the gospel. Paul, therefore, chose Timothy to accompany and assist him in preaching, and causing him to be circumcised\* for the satisfaction of the Jewish converts,

<sup>\*</sup> Circumcised. St. Paul wished Timothy to be circumcised to gratify the Jewish Christians, who would not permit him to preach: the reason of which was, because the proselytes of the gate, or uncircumcised, were not permitted to come into the same court of the temple with the Jews; and if Timothy had gone into that court with them, the Jews would not hearken to him, or benefit by his preaching, having a special aversion to such. And therefore Paul had him circumcised, His father being a Greek, and consequently his not being circumcised in his childhood was well known. It may be added, that if Timothy had been known not to have been circumcised, he would not have had permission to preach in any of the synagogues on his travels.

who knew his father to be a Greek, he took him along with him. And as they travelled from place to place, they delivered the decrees of the council of Jerusalem, to be kept as a sacred record; by which they established the churches, and every day converted many to the faith of Christ.

After they had gone through Phrygia and Galatia, they were by revelation forbid to preach the gospel in Asia; and coming over against Mysia, intending to pass by Bithynia, the Spirit again by revelation forbade them: and therefore passing by Mysia, they came to Troas, where, in the night, there appeared to Paul, in a vision, a manof Macedonia, that stood and prayed, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." From which, Paul concluding it to be the immediate call of God to him, to go and preach the gospel there, he parted from Troas, and with his companion sailed directly to Samothracia; the next day to Neapolis, and from thence to Philippi, the metropolis of one part of Macedonia, and a Roman colony. Here they staid some days; and going out of the city, by a river's side they found an oratory, to which certain religious resorted to pray, and going into it, they found many women assembled, to whom Paul preached the gospel. Of the number of these was Lydia, an inhabitant of Thyatira, and proselyte of the Jews, whose heart the Lord, by the gentle influence of his grace, opened and disposed so to attend upon and regard the gospel message, that she was truly converted to God. And when she was baptized, with her family, she importuned Paul and Silas to take up their abode in her house, to which they consented. As they were going to prayer, there met them a young maid, who had been for some time under the influence of what the Greeks call a pythonic spirit, or spirit of divination, which they supposed to be from Apollo; and though she was but a slave, she obtained much gain for her owners, by her pretended prophesying. This girl followed Paul and Silas for several days, crying out, "These are the servants of the most high God, which shew us the way of salvation." The apostle being grieved lest the people should apprehend that he acted in confederacy with an evil spirit,

turned and said to the spirit, " In the name of Jesus Christ I command thee to come out of her." And the same instant he left her. But when her masters saw that by this miracle all prospect of further gain by her divination was gone, they apprehended Paul and Silas, and brought them before the magistrates, complaining, that these Jews occasioned a great disturbance in the city, teaching a religion contrary to theirs, and prohibited by the Roman laws, which allowed of no worship, but what was approved by the Senate. Upon this a great tumult arose, and the magistrates ordered them to be \* scourged, first rending off their clothes; which having done, they committed them to prison, strictly charging the jailor to keep them safely; who immediately put them in irons, and secured them in the strongest apartment of the prison. But notwithstanding this cruel treatment and close confinement, these blessed confessors, full of heavenly tranquillity and inward peace, spent their midnight-hours in prayers and praises to him that thought them worthy of suffering these cruel indignities for his name, and the word of his testimony.

Whilst they thus enjoyed this holy serenity and cheer-fulness, there was suddenly a great earthquake, so that the very foundation of the prison shook, the prison-doors flew open, and the chains of all the prisoners were miraculously loosened. The jailor, awaking with the noise, and seeing the prison-doors open, concluded that all the prisoners had escaped; and thinking that this would be imputed to his neglect, and be of fatal consequence to him, in despair drew his sword with design to kill himself. But Paul, aware of the horrid act which his rashness intended, and anxious to prevent it, cried aloud, saying, "Stay thy desperate hand, and do thyself no harm; for we are all here, and none shall take the

<sup>\*</sup> Scourged, &c. In scourging, rending or tearing off the garments was used. Both hands were tied to a pillar on each side, then the lictor, or officer of the synagogue, took hold of the garments, not caring whether he tore or stripped ihem off, till the criminal's breast was quite uncovered. And this was agreeable to the Roman custom.

opportunity of escaping. Then calling for lights, the jailor sprang in, and being in a great tremor, fell prostrate at the feet of Paul and Silas in silent consternation. Recovering himself a little, and leading them in the most respectful manner out of the inner prison, he said, with the utmost earnestness, "O sirs, what must I do that I may be saved?" They, gladly seizing this opportunity of preaching Christ to him, answered, "Believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we preach as the only Saviour, and thou shalt be saved." The word came with such power to his heart, that he was melted with the gracious tidings, and his tenderness soon manifested itself by his immediate care of them, in washing their stripes, and treating them with all possible kindness. And having brought them into his dwelling-house, he and all his family were immediately baptized. He then spread his table for their refreshment, and believing in God, with all his house, he was transported with unutterable joy at the happy transition he had so suddenly made, from the darkness and danger of a heathen state, into the glorious privileges of the people of God.

The magistrates, having scourged, and committed Paul and Silas in an unwarrantable manner, began afterwards to consider what they had done; and, to prevent being called to an account for this rash proceeding, they sent to the jailor to discharge the prisoners, thinking their joy for their liberty might stifle their resentment. The converted jailor thought this would be welcome news to his prisoners, and told them they were at liberty to go where they pleased, and wished them well. But Paul would not pass over the abuse thus, telling the jailor, "They have shamefully and in public abused us, who are Roman citizens, without trial or shewing cause, and after this committed us to prison; and do they think this private discharge will satisfy us? No, let them come themselves and discharge us openly." The officers acquainted the magistrates with Paul's resolution; who hearing that they were Romans, knew they could not answer it to the governor, and therefore were glad to come in person to the prison, where, giving them fair words, they desired them to depart, and leave the city. And from the prison they

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went to Lydia's house, where having spent some time with the brethren, and comforted them, they left Phi-

lippi.

After they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to the celebrated city Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews; into which Paul, according to his usual custom, entered, and during three successive sabbaths, preached out of the scriptures, that Jesus must of necessity be the Messiah promised to the Jews. Upon which some of them received the faith, and associated with Paul and Silas, besides several Greek proselvtes and women of quality. But the infidel Jews opposing them as much as possible, got together some\* officers belonging to the courts of judicature, and in a tumultuous manner beset Jason's house, where, searching for Paul and Silas, and not finding them, they resolved to be revenged on somebody, and therefore seized Jason and some of the brethren, and carried them before the officers of justice; complaining, that these men, who had filled the world with† disorder and confusion, were entertained by Jason; and that they preached a doctrine quite contrary to Cæsar's authority over them, declaring one Jesus to be their King. The magistrates knew not well what to do in this case, being tender of disobliging either the Jews or Romans; and therefore taking security of Jason for himself and his companions, they dismissed them. But being concerned for Paul's safety, by night they sent him and Silas to Beræa, where they went straitway into the synagogue, and met with a sort of people

<sup>\*</sup> Officers, &c. The agoraioi of the Greek can have no relation to the English version, which calls them lewd fellows; nor much to the vulgate, except they mean by agoraioi, the circumforaneous lawyers, not those of the forum; for they translating the Greek, de vulgo viros quosquam malos, certain wicked men of the common people, must mean the mob. But the word, without any periphrasis, plainly signifies belonging to a court of judicature; and by it possibly, in this place, might be meant some of those that used to summon the people to assemblies upon extraordinary occasions.

<sup>†</sup> Disorder, &c. The Greek word anastatôsantes is very oddly turned in our translation, by rendering it, to turn it upside down. See Acts, xvii. 6,

ingenuous and mild, vastly differing from the rude inhabitants of Thessalonica, for they cheerfully embraced the faith, and spent their time in reading the scriptures, observing whether what Paul taught was agreeable with what the scriptures say of the Messiah. Many, therefore, of the Jews received the faith, as likewise many Gentiles of the better sort, both men and women. Now when the Jews of Thessalonica heard that Paul preached the gospel at Beræa, they pursued him thither, resolving he should not rest within reach of them. To secure him, therefore, from their malice, and to elude the persecutors, the Christians there sent Paul toward the sea-side, as if he meant to take ship, whereas he intended to go to Athens on foot; but Silas and Timothy were left behind, and were ordered to follow after.

While Paul waited for his company at Athens, he perceived, with great emotion of spirit, that the city was wholly \* given to idolatry: for which reason he not only preached in the synagogue to the Jews and proselytes, but in other places of concourse, he took occasion to make known the Christian doctrine to all the heathens he met. Some learned men of Athens, both Epicureans † and Stoics, seeing Paul so ready to engage in dispute with every one, undertook to confute him; but not understanding him, some said, he was a prating babbling fellow; others, that he came to discover some strange God to them, because he frequently mentioned Jesus and the resurrection.

After this, they conducted him to that celebrated hill near the citadel, which was called the Areopagus, ‡ and examined what new religion it was he taught; for all that they had hitherto heard, was new and strange, and

<sup>\*</sup> Wholly. That Athens was so, appears from the number of idols there, being more than in all Greece besides.

<sup>†</sup> Epicureans. There were two contrary sects of philosophers at Athens, the Epicureans, who denied a providence, and the Stoics, who maintained the doctrine of fate, but denied all freedom of will.

<sup>‡</sup> Areopagus. In Athens, their areopagus was their senate or standing court of judicature, by whose laws and orders any new gods were received among them;

therefore they desired to have a full account of it. Paul being brought before the magistrates in the Areopagus, said, "I perceive, O Athenians, that ye are exceedingly addicted to the worship of invisible powers; for as I passed along the streets of this magnificent city, I found an altar on which was this remarkable inscription, 'To THE UNKNOWN God; '\* so desirous do you seem to be, that no deity, whether known or unknown, may be passed by without some religious regard. Now I should think myself remarkably happy, if I might direct you to the knowledge of true religion. Him, therefore, whom you acknowledge not to know, yet profess to worship, is he that I preach, the invisible God of heaven and earth, who cannot be contained in temples of man's making; nor can any image made by man be a proper instrument of his worship, he being so far from wanting our help, that it is he that gives to all their life, and all that they pos-And from one man he hath made a whole world of men, who, by his providential care, inhabit the whole earth, he having, in his unerring council, allotted to each the boundaries of their several habitations; all things in the disposition of his providence entering in this one great end, that they should seek after their Creator and worship him, who is indeed near every one of us, even as the soul that animates us. For our life, motion, and subsistence, is wholly through him, according to that which one of your own poets hath said. therefore being our Creator, we cannot in reason suppose him to be the work of our hands, such as a piece of gold or silver, how curiously soever wrought by human arts

and, therefore, as soon as they conceived Paul was a promulger of new and strange deities, they brought him to the areopagus to have him examined, what gods they were that he thus preached. Acts, ch. xvii. v. 19.

<sup>\*</sup> Unknown God. There are many stories about this inscription; but it is most probable it proceeded from their hospitality towards the men that occasioned it; for they were as ready to receive any strange god to their worship, as they were to entertain strangers. And this is plain from the whole inscription, of which this is but part; which runs thus, "To the gods of Europe, Asia, and Africa, and to one strange God, which they knew not."

This time of ignorance hath lasted long; but now God calls you all to repentance, for he hath appointed a great and awful day, in which he will judge the whole world in righteousness, and pass a final sentence of happiness or misery on each according to his true character; which he will do by that illustrious Man, whom he hath ordained, of which he hath given sufficient assurance to all men, by raising him from the dead." When they heard him mention the resurrection, some rudely mocked and made a jest of it, as a despicable and incredible tale, particularly the Epicureans did this, who deny a future state: and others, of a more curious turn, coolly said, "This is enough for the present, we will hear thee again on this subject, when a convenient opportunity offers." Now Paul, finding so little disposition in this learned auditory, to hearken to the truth, went out of the midst of them, leaving the far greater part in the same deplorable state of ignorance and superstition as he found them. vertheless, there were some that believed and associated with him, particularly Dionysius one of the senators or judges in the Areopagus, and his wife Damaris with some

From Athens Paul departed to Corinth,\* where he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because the emperor Claudius, toward the latter end of his reign, made an edict to banish the Jews from Rome and Italy; and finding that Aquila was brought up to the same trade †

<sup>\*</sup> Corinth. This was a city of so much consequence, that it was at one time considered by the Romans as a rival, almost as dangerous as Carthage. From the convenience of its situation for commerce, it abounded in riches, and was furnished with all the accommodations, elegancies, and superfluities of life. This by too natural a consequence, led its inhabitants into luxury, lewdness, and all manner of vice; and they were accordingly infamous even to a proverb.

<sup>†</sup> Trade. It was a great maxim and principle among the Jews, "That he, who teaches not his son a trade, teaches him to be a thief." They thought it not only fit, but a necessary part of education, whereby, if reduced by necessity, though ever so great and learned, they might by manual labour maintain themselves. Hence nothing was more common, than for their wisest and most learned

in which he was when young instructed, he took up his quarters with him, and wrought with him in the trade of tent-making. But every sabbath he preached in the synagogues of the Jews, labouring to convince both Jews and Greeks.

By this time Silas and Timothy were come from Macedonia; and Paul being very much concerned at the obstinacy of the Jews, did his utmost to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah; but when they not only opposed him, but blasphemed the name of the Saviour, and treated him contumeliously, he not only used that ordinary ceremony of shaking his shoes or his garments, intimating thereby their unworthiness of having the gospel further preached to them, and the sad consequences that attend obstinacy, but said, Having thus warned you, I am free from the guilt of your destruction, which will certainly come upon you; I will stay no longer among you, but will without any further scruple preach to the Gentiles. And going out of the synagogue, he went to the house of one Justus, a Gentile by birth, but a Jewish Proselyte. Before Paul quitted the synagogue, though many of the Jews opposed him, Crispus, the chief of the synagogue, and several of the Corinthians believed and were baptized. At this time, conscious of the disadvantages attending his person and address; he was discouraged in a view of the learning, politeness and grandeur of many Gentile inhabitants of the city, and by the assaults which had been made upon him in various places. The Lord Jesus, therefore, interposed in a very gracious manner, and said to him by night in a vision, "Fear not,

Rabbins to take their denominations from their callings. This custom was taken up by the christians, especially the monks and ascetics of the early ages, who together with their strict profession, and almost incredible exercises of devotion, took upon them a particular trade, whereby they maintained themselves. The business our apostle was put to, was that of tent-making, whereat he wrought, for some particular reasons, even after his calling to the apostleship. An honest but mean trade; though it was useful and profitable, especially in those warlike countries where armies had such frequent use for tents.

for I am with thee; preach the gospel confidently in this place; for though some oppose thee, yet thou shalt not be personally injured; for I have much people in this city, to whom I design to make my word effectual.' Upon this Paul continued at Corinth eighteen months, preaching the gospel to them of Corinth and all Achaia, and further instructing and confirming them that received it.

During Paul's stay at Corinth, Gallio being proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a general insurrection against Paul, and brought him before the proconsul, demanding justice against him, complaining, that he had persuaded the people to worship God contrary to the law of the Paul being about to make his defence, Gallio spake thus to the Jews, "Were the case before me matter of injustice or scandal, I should readily take cognizance of it; but since the question betwixt you is only a verbal controversy, whether Jesus ought to be acknowledged as Messiah; whether christians by that name ought to distinguish themselves from the incredulous Jews, and concerning your law: of these things I am no competent judge, nor does it belong to my cognizance, the senate of Rome having as yet made no law against the christians, and therefore I shall not meddle with it." Some of the natives of Corinth seeing the proconsul throw the indictment against Paul out of court, took Sosthenes one of the rulers of the Jewish consistory, that appeared forward in this complaint against him, and beat him in open court: the proconsul did not concern himself to interpose at all in the affair, being perhaps not unwilling that so troublesome a plaintiff as Sosthenes should feel the consequence of his own bigotry and ill-nature.

After this Paul staid some time at Corinth; and when he went from thence, took with him Priscilla and Aquila, having made a vow\* for a time not to shave his head.

<sup>\*</sup> Vow. This vow was probably the vow of the Nazarites among the Jews, Num. vi. 5, which was not always for life, but sometimes for a determinate time, but when that time was past, one part of the vow was, to be shaved, v. 18, and to offer up the hair (called the bair of separation) to put it in the fire. But be-

And when he came to Ephesus he left them there, telling them he must be at Jerusalem before the passover; but afterwards, if God permitted, he would return to them. Then going by sea from Ephesus, he landed at Cæsarea, and thence went up to Jerusalem, and visited the congregation of christians there; and having done so, and kept the feast there, he went from thence to Antioch, where having spent some time, he took his leave, and travelled through Galatia and Phrygia, confirming the churches and

instructing all the new converts.

Some time after Paul had left Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus, a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, came thither. He possessed great natural eloquence, and had much skill in the writings of the Old Testament, and was well in instructed in the gospel, but not perfectly in all things relating to it; yet being very fervent in spirit, and earnestly desirous to be useful, he began to preach among them out of the prophets; as yet, however, he had but an imperfect notion of the truth, being only acquainted with the baptism of John, insisting upon the doctrine of repentance and faith in the expected Messiah. Aquila and Priscilla perceiving that he discovered an excellent spirit, were desirous of promoting his further improvement in knowledge and usefulness; accordingly they took him to their own house, and there explained to him the doctrines of the gospel more completely. And when Apollos was disposed to go into Achaia, the christians at Ephesus wrote to those of the church of Corinth and all Achaia, commendatory letters. And when he came thither he was very useful among them, instructing and confirming those, who by the

cause this vow is here made at Cenchrea, and not at Jerusalem, (where the accomplishment of the vow was to be performed, see Numb. vi. 13,) it is most probable that this shaving here, was not on the accomplishing his vow, but upon some intervening illegal pollution, in which case he was bound to offer for a cleansing, and on the seventh day to shave his head, and so begin the days again, ib. c. vi. v. 11, 12. This probably might be done in any city, where a man happened to be so polluted; but the completion of the vow, when the days of his separation were fulfilled, was to be at Jerusalem.

preaching of the gospel, had been converted to the faith, and convinced the Jews out of the scriptures, that Jesus was the Messiah.

Whilst Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took his way through the upper part of the country, to Ephesus, and finding there some christian professors publishing the gospel, he asked them whether they had received the extracrdinary gifts of the Holy Ghost since they believed? They told him, they had not so much as heard any thing of it. Upon which he said, " How can that be, since the christian baptism is in the name of the Holy Ghost?" To which they answered, "That John's baptism was all they had received." Then Paul knowing that by John's baptism they had implicitly acknowledged Christ under the title of "Him that should come after him," he explicitly taught them the whole doctrine of Christ and the Holy Ghost; and when they heard this they believed, and were received into the church as christian Proselytes in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. After which, Paul laid his hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost, by whose power they immediately spake with new tongues, and preached to the great edification of the church. After this Paul went and preached the gospel in the synagogues that were at Ephesus to the Jews, for the space of three months, labouring to convince them; but instead of being convinced, they not only rejected the gospel, but spoke reproachfully of it in public before the people; whereupon he left them, and took those that were converted by themselves, and instructed them daily in a place where scholars \* were taught privately, and which belonged to one Tyrannus. This he did for the space of two years; in which time all.

<sup>\*</sup> Scholars. There were two kinds of schools among the Jews, wherein the law was taught, private or public. Private, wherein any doctor entertained scholars, and such was this of Tyrannus here, under the title of "Houses of Learning," as one kind of their holy places; their schools as well as their synagogues being accounted so. Their public schools were those where their consistories sat to resolve doubts on the law.

the inhabitants of the proconsular Asia, both Jews and Greeks, had the gospel preached to them. And to add the greater efficacy and success to the doctrine he preached, God wrought many extraordinary and uncommon miracles by the hands of Paul, insomuch, that, besides his curing those who were brought to him, handkerchiefs or aprons were carried from his body to those that were sick at a distance; and presently on their touching them, the diseases they were afflicted with were removed, and the evil spirits themselves came out of them that were possessed, which soon raised the reputation of the apostle to a very high degree, and added the divine attestation to

what he taught the Ephesians.

Some of the vagabond Jews, who were professed exorcists, observing this, attempted to cast out devils by using the name of Jesus; among whom were the seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, one of the chief of the families of the priests, who conjuring the evil Spirit in the name of Jesus, were thus answered from the possessed, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but you come not with any authority from Jesus, who hath given it to Paul." And the man who was possessed fell furiously upon them, tearing off their clothes and wounding them, so that they fled from him. This being soon rumoured among the Jews and natives of Ephesus, a great awe and fear prevailed among the people, and the name of the Lord Jesus was exceedingly magnified. Many also who believed, came to Paul, confessing their former course of life, to know what they should do: and many that had studied and practised magical arts, brought forth their books and burnt them publickly, though they were of great value. Of so great authority was the word of God, as it was preached by Paul among the Ephesians and those of Asia.

After this Paul determined, as he went through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, and from thence to Rome; and sending into Macedonia, Timothy and Erastus, two of his assistants, himself stayed some time in Asia. About the same time there happened a great commotion; for one Demetrius, a silversmith, who ma-

nufactured little shrines\* of silver, with the image of Diana in them, had many of the same profession that wrought under him, who were all maintained by that employment. All these therefore, whose livelihood was concerned in it, he called together, and thus harrangued them, "Sirs, ye know, that by this employment we maintain ourselves, which by this Paul's preaching, not only here in Ephesus, but throughout all Asia, is in great danger of being ruined; for he hath already prevailed upon many people to forsake our manner of worship, affirming, that they are not true gods which are made with hands, and still persists in so doing; whereby not only are we likely to lose our business, but the worship of the great goddess Diana, and the magnificence of her temple will be despised."

The people upon hearing this, were filled with rage, apprehending both their trade and their religion to be in danger, they therefore ran about the eity and cried out with great violence, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!!" And the city was filled with confusion; during which they seized Gaius and Aristarehus, two of Paul's companions, and hurried them away to the theatre, where their favourite games were celebrated to the honour of that deity; and when Paul heard of the distress and danger of his friends, and would have gone to the theatre to address the people, the disciples who were with him would not permit him to expose his valuable person; besides, some of the prefects of the games, perceiving the ungovernable rage of the populace, kindly sent him a caution not to stir out. The tumult rather increasing than diminishing, some of the officers brought out Alexander, a Jewish

<sup>\*</sup> Shrines. In the idolatry of the heathens they used to carry the images of their gods in procession from one city to another. This they did in a chariot consecrated for that purpose. But besides this greater, there was a less frame wherein it was placed, by the Romans called Ferculum, not much unlike that which the Greeks called Naos, a little chapel, representing the form of a temple, with an image in it, which being set upon the altar, or other solemn place, and the leaves of the door opened, the image appeared sitting or standing in state, and so was represented to the spectators. Similar follies in the worship of saints and angels distinguishes the adherents to the church of Rome.

proselyte to the faith, and examined him, in hopes that he would excuse himself, and lay the fault upon Paul. Then Alexander beckoned with his hand for silence, thinking to make his defence; but the Ephesians knowing him to be a Jew, and supposing he was of Paul's opinion, they would not suffer him to speak; but continued for two hours running up and down, and crying, "Great is

Diana of the Ephesians!"

The register of the games, seeing the tumult still increase, thought it high time to compose and quiet the people, to whom he made the following speech: "Inhabitants of Ephesus, what man is there in the world that does not know that Ephesus, among the cities of Greece, hath the honour to be chief in the worship of Diana, because her temple incloses that image which fell down from Jupiter? This being granted by all, what need is there of all this noise? For as to these men, whom ye have brought hither, they have neither robbed your temples, nor spoken any thing against your goddess Diana; and as for Demetrius and the artificers that depend on him, if they have suffered any damage, the law is open: but if you have any other suit of controversy among you, it shall be referred to such judicature as the law appoints: for we are in danger of being called in question already for this day's uproar, there being no cause or excuse for it." Upon which the multitude, without any further violence, separated, and returned to their own habitations.

This commotion being appeased, Paul called all the disciples together, and having left Timothy in charge of the congregation, he took an affectionate leave of them, and departed from Ephesus to go into Macedonia, and to visit

the churches planted there.

After the apostle had arrived at Macedonia, and spent several months in his tour through Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonia, and Berea, exhorting and comforting the Christians in all those parts, he went from thence into Greece, that he might visit the churches at Corinth, and in the neighbouring cities of Achaia. Here he continued about three months, and as he was going from thence to Syria, in order to carry alms to Judea, being informed

that the Jews laid wait for him, he altered his course, and passed through Macedonia a third time; after which Sopater accompanied him into Asia all the way; but Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus, and Trophimus, went before into Asia, and waited for Paul and

his company at Troas.

After the passovér Paul went thither, and tarried there seven days; and on the Lord's-day, the Christians being met together to celebrate the eucharist, Paul preached to them at large, and intending to depart the next morning, he continued his discourse till midnight. A certain young man named Eutychus, sitting at a window for air, and falling fast asleep, fell out of the window the depth of three stories. This had proved fatal to him, but for the presence of Paul, who, laying his healing hands upon him, restored him alive to his friends. The apostle then returned to his work, and going up again into the chamber where the assembly met, and having broken bread and eaten with the rest of the disciples, he continued conversing with them even till the break of day. But some of the company went before by sea to Assos, intending to take in Paul, who, meeting them there, went with them to Mitvlenc. Passing by Chios, the next day they arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium, and the day after came to Miletus; for Paul, intending to make no stay in any part of Asia, ordered them not to stop at Ephesus, because he intended, if possible, to be at Jerusalem at the feast of Pentecost: yet being desirous to speak with the elders of Ephesus, he sent a message requesting an interview with them at Miletus.

Where, when they were all met, Paul addressed to them a most affectionate discourse, and said to them, "My dear brethren, you well know, from the first day that I came into Asia, how I have behaved myself among you, for the space of three years, preaching the gospel with all humility and affection, and amidst many trials occasioned by the malice of the Jews, who conspired against my life. Ye likewise know, that I never concealed any thing that might be for your advantage, but freely shewed and instructed you in all things both publicly and privately; preaching to the Jews and proselytes

in their synagogues, and to the Gentiles elsewhere, the whole doctrine of the gospel, and urging, with the greatest earnestness, the absolute necessity of repentance towards God, and of a living faith in Christ, in order to salvation.

"And now I am going to Jerusalem, willing to suffer what shall befall me there, and foreseeing that there I shall be seized and imprisoned, being apprized of it by those that have the spirit of prophecy. . However, I am prepared for it, and value not my life, if I may but be serviceable in the ministry with which Christ has entrusted me. And now this I know, that after this my departure from you, ye will never see my face again. And therefore I declare to you all, that I am innocent of that ruin, which I foresee will befall all those that do not adhere to Christ, having done my best to prevent it: for I have fully communicated to you the whole Christian doctrine, which may serve you as an antidote against all those heresies, which are likely to break in among you. Wherefore look to yourselves, and to the whole flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath constituted you inspectors; see that ye diligently feed, with wholesome doctrine, the church of God, which he hath redeemed with his own precious blood: for it is certain, that when I am gone, you will be solicited by false teachers, who, like so many mischievous wolves, will enter in among you, having no mercy on the flock. Yea, some among yourselves will vent pernicious doctrines, to make divisions among you, and to gain followers. Be ye careful therefore, remembering with how many tears I have warned you night and day for these three years of these things. And now, brethern, I recommend you to God and the gospel, and even to him that is able to edify you in your most holy faith, and to give you, at length, an inheritance in glory, among all them that are prepared for it by his grace. I appeal to yourselves, whether I have endeavoured to make any secular advantage by my labours among you. Ye can all bear me witness, that I have, by my own hands, maintained myself, and those that were with me. I have, by my actions, set an example before you, and shewed you all things relating to your duty, how that, thus labouring as I have done, you should Vol. II.

assist the needy and infirm, according to that saying of Christ, "It is more-blessed to give than to receive."

When Paul had ended this exhortation, he kneeled down and prayed with them all. And taking leave of him in the most passionate expressions of affection and grief, they embraced and kissed him; but his expression, that they should see him no more, affected them deeply, and accompanying him to the ship, they took their final leave of him.

After this sad parting from the elders of Ephesus, Paul, with his attendants, sailed with a fair gale to Coos; thence to Rhodes, and so to Patara, where finding a ship bound for Phænicia, they went on board, and put to sea; and coming within sight of Cyprus, they left it on their left hand, and sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre, for there the ship was to unload its freight. meeting there with some that had received the gospel, and were endued with gifts, particularly that of prophecy, he continued with them seven days; and they, by revelation, told Paul, that he would incur much danger by going to Jerusalem, and therefore dissuaded him from going thither. But this moved him not, for he left that place, and all of them, men, women, and children, attended him out of the city, and there, on the sea-shore,

he kneeled down and prayed at parting.

From Tyre they went to Ptolemais, where they tarried one day with the disciples. The next day Paul and his friends departed from Ptolemais, and travelling by land came to Cæsarea, and visited Philip the Evangelist, who was one of the seven deacons, and who had been sent by the apostles to preach the gospel in Samaria and other places, with whom they lodged some time. This Philip had four virgin daughters, all of them endued with the spirit of prophecy; and while they were at Philip's house, there came to them from Judea a certain prophet named Agabus; who, after the manner of the old prophets, which often prophesied by symbols, took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet with it, and said, "It hath been revealed to me, that after this manner shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind Paul, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." Whereupon the

whole company, with earnest entreaties and tears, begged of Paul not to go to Jerusalem. To whom Paul, sensibly affected with the concern which they expressed on his account, and yet resolutely bent on following what he thought the evident call of duty, replied, "Why do ye afflict me, and by your tender importunity dissuade me from this journey? For I am willing to suffer bonds, and even death itself, for the propagation of the gospel of the Lord Jesus." And when they found that no entreaties could

prevail, they submitted to the will of God.

After spending these days at Cæsarea, they all set out for Jerusalem, taking with them several of the disciples of Cæsarea, particularly Mnason the Cypriot, who had formerly received the faith, when Paul and Barnabas were at Cyprus. Being arrived at Jerusalem, they were joyfully received by the faithful there, and the next day they waited on James, who, with all the elders of Judea, were assembled together. When he had saluted them, he acquainted them with the success of his ministry among the Gentiles. Upon which they blessed God, for the wonderful works wrought upon the heathen idolaters by his preaching; and after that, began to tell him what at present would be prudent for him to do, not so much in respect of the unbelieving, as the converted Jews, of whom there were many thousands in Judea, who, though they had received the gospel, yet continued very zealous for the observation of the Mosaical law. " These (said they) have heard it affirmed of thee, that thou permittest the Gentile converts to remain uncircumcised, and also that those Jews that are dispersed in Asia, and elsewhere, whom thou hast converted, leave off circumcision and other ceremonies of the Mosaical law at thy persuasion. This, therefore, will be the event in all probability: all the Jewish Christians will hear of thy being come hither, and will throng in crowds to see how thou behavest thyself in this matter. Therefore take our advice: there are four men here at this time, who have taken a Nazarite's vow upon them, which being accomplished, they are to perform the ceremonies prescribed. These do thou perform with them, and by this they will be persuaded that they heard false reports respecting thee.

Paul took their advice, that he might not exasperate them, and went into the temple, and did all that was requisite for a Nazarite's purification, and when that was done gave solemn notice of it; upon which they were, according to the law of Moses, to make an offering for each person. And when the seven days, wherein those sacrifices were to be performed, were near an end, many unbelieving Jews of Asia, that had before opposed him, being now at Jerusalem, seeing him in the temple, set the multitude upon him, who seized him, crying out, "This is he that hath taught wherever he came, that the Jews should be destroyed, the law abolished, and the temple laid waste; he hath profuned the temple by bringing Greeks into it; and so has justly forfeited his life to its injured honours." This last thing they spake more confidently than truly; for having seen Trophimus, an Ephesian, with him in the city, they rashly concluded he had brought him into the temple.

This outcry so exasperated the rabble, that they dragged him violently out of the temple, that it might not be defiled with his blood, and immediately the temple gates were ordered to be closed, to prevent any further riot, or violation of the sacred place; and when the mob, who had now got him into their cruel hands, were about to murder him, Lysias, the tribune of the cohort, being informed of his danger, immediately sent a detachment of his soldiers to secure him, and perceiving him to be very obnoxious to the multitude, commanded him to be bound with two chains. Not being able to find out the cause of this uproar by reason of the extreme confusion, he committed Paul to the tower of Antonia; and as they were going up the stairs to the tower, the throng of the Jews was so pressing, that the soldiers were forced to carry Paul in their arms to secure him from them; for they pursued

him, crying out to have him put to death.

When Paul was at the tower gate, he spoke in Greek to the commander, and asked him if he would permit him to speak to him; who thinking he had been that Egyptian false prophet, who had raised a sedition in Judea not long before, and had procured four thousand to follow with him, he seemed unwilling to suffer the

apostle to speak. But Paul, explaining himself, told him he was a citizen of Tarsus, which enjoyed the Roman privileges; and therefore he hoped he would not deny him the favour of vindicating himself. When the captain of the guard heard this, he consented, and Paul standing on the stairs, and beckoning with his hand for silence, he addressed himself in this manner to them in

the Hebrew tongue:

"Give me leave, O ye people, to clear myself of the accusation brought against me. I am a Jew, born in Tarsus, vet brought up in this city, under the tuition of Gamaliel, and in the way of my education was as zealous as any of you are this day; for I persecuted the Christians with the utmost severity, binding and imprisoning all sorts, without distinction of age or sex. For the truth of this I appeal to the Sanhedrim, especially the highpriest, from whom I received a commission to seize all the Christians I could find in Syria, and bring them to Jerusalem to be punished. And as I was going to execute this commission, being near Damascus, I was surprised with a light from heaven, and falling to the ground, a voice thundered out of the clouds, saying, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' And asking who it was, I received this for answer, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.' And they that were with me saw the light and were afraid, but no one heard the voice save myself. But the same voice bid me go to Damascus, where I should receive instructions. Being blind for a time, I was led to Damascus; and Ananias, a Christian, came and by the command of the Spirit restored my sight; assuring me, that God had chosen me to preach the gospel, and publish to all men the things which Christ had revealed to me; in order to which I was baptized, and admitted into the church. And at my first coming to Jerusalem after this, as I was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance, and saw Jesus, and he commanded me to hasten from this place, because my former zeal against the gospel would hinder my preaching of it now. Against this I argued, that I thought it would further it the more, instancing in my persecuting the Christians, and assisting at the death of Stephen, which I presumed might convince them of my being in the right, and put them upon inquiring into the cause of my change. But this did not prevail; for Christ commanded me to depart from Jerusalem, telling me he would make me his

apostle to the Gentiles."

Thus far the Jews had patience to suffer him to speak; but when he mentioned the Gentiles, and his commission to them, they lifted up their voices in the most outrageous outcry, saying, "Away with this blasphemous fellow from the earth, for he is not worthy to live a moment longer on it." And while they were thus violent, making as if they would stone him, and shewing very extravagant signs of their fury, the captain commanded him to be brought into the tower, where he should be scourged till he should confess by what means he had thus incensed the people. And as they were fastening him, in order to scourge him, Paul said to the captain, "Do the Roman laws permit you to deal thus with a Roman citizen, before sentence is passed on him?" Upon this the captain went to the commander-in-chief, advising him to be cautious in what he did to Paul, for he was a Roman. The commander hearing that, came and asked Paul, whether it was so; for, said he, I am a Roman, but not by birth, having purchased that privilege. "But," said Paul, "I was born a Roman." This put them by their design of scourging him, and not a little perplexed the commandant, who feared he had already done more than he could answer in putting Paul in irons. They therefore freed him from his chains; but yet being desirous to know the bottom of the business, he convened the Sanhedrim, and brought out Paul to see what they would object against him.

The Sanhedrim being assembled, Paul was called; who, surveying them, with his usual presence of mind, thus began his speech: "Men and brethren, though I am now brought before you as a malefactor, I have the satisfaction of being conscious that none can justly advance any charge against me, for I have, even to this day, conducted my-

self, before God, in all good conscience."

Ananias, the high-priest, looking upon this introduction as a very great insolence and presumption, and fearing the rest of his speech would be of the same nature, resolved effectually to stop him, and therefore commanded the officers that stood near him to strike him on the mouth.

Then Paul, animated on a sudden by a secret impulse of a prophetic spirit, said, "God is about to smite thee, O thou whited wall! for sittest thou on the tribunal of justice, and yet, in violation of the law, commandest thou me to be smitten?" The standers-by, hearing this, reproved Paul for railing against the high-priest. To whom Paul justified himself, saying, "I did not \*acknowledge him to be the high-priest; for it is written,

<sup>\*</sup> Acknowledge. The versions make St. Paul guilty of speaking an untruth, when they make him say, " I wist not, brethren, that he was the high-priest." Acts xxiii. 5. For it seems impossible that St. Paul should not have known the greatest part of the members of the Sanhedrim, and especially the high-priest, whose garments alone were enough to distinguish him from others. 'Tis true, that for some years before, St. Paul had not been at Jerusalem, and that Ananias was exalted to that dignity in his absence; besides that, there was then such a confusion in the Jewish government, that sometimes three different high-priests were chosen in one year. But St. Paul having lived at Jerusalem many years before, having been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and having had a commission to persecute the Christians at Damascus, it is not to be presumed, that he had so lost the idea of those persons that made up the Sanhedrim, that he could not distinguish them when he returned to the city. It is likewise observed in the following verse, that St. Paul perceived one part of the council were sadducees, and the other pharisees; which he could not have done, if he had not known them. And how could he have taken the high-priest to witness, Acts xxii. 5, "that he persecuted the Christians unto death," if he had not known him? But suppose he did not know Ananias to be the high-priest, yet he could not but know he was one of the council. Besides, it can give no advantageous opinion of St. Paul, that he pronounced those words against Ananias, "God shall smite thee," &c. without knowing him; and to think that he was so transported with anger, that he did not know against whom he denounced this prediction. Is it not more natural to acknowledge, that he spoke wisely, and by the direction of the Holy Ghost, than to imagine him to have excused his pretended rashness by his want of knowledge? However it be, if this Ananias was the high-priest of the same name with him

Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." But Paul, perceiving that the council was divided, part of them being pharisees, who believed another life after this, and part of them sadducees, that did not; he took the advantage of their division, and said, "I was by my education, and still am in judgment, a pharisee, as my father was, and the chief thing for which I am called in question is, my believing that there is another life after this, and a resurrection from the dead, which is a pure pharisaical doctrine, which all of that sect do hold as well as I." speech of Paul's increased the contention, the doctors of the law, who were generally pharisees, taking his part, and declaring him innocent; saying, " If God hath revealed this to him, let us not oppose the will of God." But their dispute turning to a direct tumult, the commandant of the guard, fearing Paul would be destroyed in this confusion, ordered the soldiers to take him by force, and carry him to the tower. Where the night following he saw a vision; the Lord Jesus appeared standing by him, and encouraging him, said, "Fear not, Paul, for as thou hast avowed and defended the faith here at Jerusalem, so shalt thou also bear thy testimony to me at Rome."

This peculiar regard of the divine goodness in Paul's protection was immediately verified; for early the next morning above forty Jews entered into a conspiracy to murder him, taking an oath not to cat or drink till they had dispatched him. The ruffians going to the Sanhedrim, acquainted them with their design, and put them in a method of accomplishing it thus: "Do you signify

who was killed with the son of Gamaliel at the destruction of Jerusalem, the apostle's prediction wanted neither apology nor retraction.

These considerations have obliged expositors to have recourse to another signification of the original word, which seems much better to express his design. They observe, that it often signifies to acknowledge; so that St. Paul is so far from excusing what he said, that he declares he does not acknowledge Ananias for the high-priest; not only because that office had ceased at the death of Christ, who afterwards was to be the only high-priest, as he declares, Heb. ix. but also because, in effect, Ananias was not the true high-priest, having only usurped this office, which, by right, belonged to Gamaliel, called Simeon, or to Ishmael, or to Josephus, and had made himself master of it by bribery.

to the commandant, that you must examine Paul upon some interrogatories, and order him to bring him before you, and by the way, before he can come to the council, we will lie in ambush and kill him." This they agreed upon; but God had otherwise determined. For Paut's nephew, hearing of their intended ambuscade, hastened to the castle, to give his uncle timely notice. Which he no sooner received, than he called to the captain of the guard, and desired him to conduct the young man to the commandant, to whom he had something of importance to communicate. The captain very obligingly did as Paul desired, and withdrawing left them together. Then the commandant taking the youth aside asked his business; who acquainted him with the Jews' design upon Paul's life, desiring his protection for his uncle. The commandant hearing this, obliged the youth to silence, and dismissed him: then calling for two captains, he bid them get their companies in readiness for an expedition, and convey Paul to Felix the governor, to whom he wrote a letter, giving him an account of the whole affair, and referring the determination of Paul's case to him. This was immediately put in execution, and that night they attended Paul as far as Antipatris; where the foot left him, and the horse conducted him to Cæsarea, where the governor resided, to whom they delivered Paul with the commandant of Jerusalem's letter; which when Felix had read, and understanding of what province Paul was a native, he dismissed the guard, and told him he would hear him when his accusers came; in the mean time securing him in the hall called Herod's Hall.

Paul having thus escaped the conspiracy of the Jews by the prudence and care of Claudius Lysias, and being now under the protection of Felix, the procurator of Judea, the Sanhedrim and their ruffians were disappointed; yet they resolved to pursue him as long as he was within

<sup>\*</sup> Such execrable vows as these were not unusual with the Jews, who pretended a right to punish, without legal process, those whom they considered as blasphemers of the law.

reach of their malice. Five days after his arrival at Cæsarea, Ananias the High-Priest, with some others of the Sanhedrim, and a certain lawyer named Tertullus, came thither, and brought their accusation against Paul. tullus being admitted to speak, began his plea with a flattering oration to Felix, telling him how happy the Jews had been in all places under his administration, and how thankful they were to him for it. Then begging his attention in what he had to say against Paul, he began thus: " May it please your excellency, as we enjoy great peace under your administration, and many illustrious deeds are happily effected by your wise and prudent government, we accept it always, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. I humbly beseech you, with your wonted candour, to listen to the charge we have to bring against this notorious offender; for we have found this man a most pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition against the present government of the Romans. Besides, he is a ringleader of the detestable sect of the Nazarenes, than which none ever sprung up among the Jews more dishonorable and impious. He has also had the audacity to profane the sacred temple at Jerusalem, by introducing strangers within the boundaries from which they are excluded, even by your authority as well as by our law, on pain of death. For these crimes we apprehended him a few days ago, and would have proceeded against him according to law; but I am sorry to say that we have been prevented by Lysias the tribune, who coming upon us with an armed force, took him by violence out of our hands, and so interrupted the course of justice. Nor should we have troubled your excellency with these complaints, had not that officer commanded us to appear before thee, to whom we now confidently commit the decision of this cause."

To this accusation the Jews assented, and confirmed the truth of all that Tertullus had asserted, who having thus delivered his charge, Paul by order of the governor, made his defence.

"I am the more ready to answer for myself before thee, O Felix, because thou hast been for many years the procurator of this nation. About twelve days ago, I

went up to Jerusalem to keep the feast of pentecost, where I behaved myself in the most orderly and quiet manner, causing no disturbance, and raising no sedition either in the city or synagogues. But as for that part of the accusation, that I am a promoter of the sect of the Nazarenes, as they call it, I frankly confess it; and that there shall be a life after this; nor can my accusers produce any evidence to the contrary. And in this religion and practice I am careful to live blamelessly, and to do my duty in all things towards God and man. As for what they pretend, of my profaning the temple, thus it was: many years after my conversion to christianity, I was sent by the pious Jews of other parts of Judea and Jerusalem, with their alms and free-will oblations. And whilst I was doing this, some Jews of Asia saw me in the temple, where I was so far from profaning it, that I did nothing but what the law required of me, without any tumult or disorder. Nay, I appeal to my enemies here present, whether, when I was brought before the council at Jerusalem, I was not dismissed without any thing of moment charged and proved against me. There is but one thing can be urged against me, and that none but the Sadducees will charge me with, which is, my acknowledging the resurrection, and that is chargeable on the Pharisees as well as me."

When Felix had thus heard the matter on both sides, he put them off, saying, "When I know more exactly the nature of the question concerning the christian religion and your law, I will determine: and as to the tumult said to be excited by Paul, when Lysias comes, his evidence will decide it." And dismissing the assembly, he remanded Paul to prison, permitting any friend to visit and assist him.

A few days after this hearing, Drusilla, the wife of Felix, a Jewess, coming to Cæsarea, Felix was inclined to gratify her curiosity as well as his own, in hearing him discourse at large concerning the faith of Christ; and sending for him, he desired him to let them hear what he could say in defence of this doctrine. Paul, knowing the character of his hearers, took occasion to insist particularly on the great obligation of observing justice between

man and man, and concerning temperance, as he knew that Felix and Drusilla had notoriously violated both; and to enforce his reasonings, faithfully admonished all who heard him, of that awful and tremendous judgment to come; when the greatest personages must appear before the righteous tribunal. And as he insisted on these three branches of the christian doctrine, wherein Felix was so much concerned, he trembled; and being uneasy to hear such doctrines as stung his conscience to the quick, he abruptly stopped the apostle, dismissing him for the present, and promising to take a future opportunity to see and hear him. Paul having continued in custody two years, Felix was by Nero removed from his place, and Portius Festus succeeded him: and though Felix had no reason to treat Paul unkindly, yet being a man that had practised much cruelty and injustice in his government, and being a great lover of money, whether gained by bribery, extortion, or otherwise, yet either because Paul did not offer him money to procure his liberty, or whether it was merely to gratify the Jews at parting, he left Paul in prison.

Festus had no sooner entered upon his government, but he went from Cæsarca to Jerusalem, when the Highpriest and other members of the Sanhedrim accused Paul, and very pressingly solicited the governor to send for him to Jerusalem, intending to lay an ambuscade in the way to kill him. But Festus, not over fond of granting favours to the Jews, told them he had left Paul in prison at Cæsarea, whither he himself should shortly go, and hear the cause between them, ordering those that were concerned, to appear against him there. Festus, after ten days' stay at Jerusalem, returned to Cæsarea; and the court being seated, Paul was brought before him, the Jews accusing him of many crimes, but proving nothing; for he cleared himself of the accusation, making it plainly appear, that he had not offended against the Mosaical law; the sanctity of the temple, or the Roman government. But notwithstanding Paul's innocence, Festus, willing to oblige the Jews, thought his putting the question to Paul to be tried at Jerusalem would have sufficiently induced him to consent. But Paul, too sensible of the malice of his enemies, and which he sometime since escaped, was unwilling to trust himself in their power, which he found he could no way avoid but by pleading his privilege as a Roman citizen. "I am, says he, a Roman, and ought not to be judged by the Jewish Sanhedrim or laws, which I have not violated, but by the Roman; and if I have done any thing which by the Roman laws is worthy of death, I desire no mercy: but if their accusations are invalid, and I am free from the charge of having injured them, I see no reason why I should be delivered up to mine enemies, and make them my judges. To prevent which I appeal to Cæsar." Festus, finding Paul resolute in maintaining his privilege, conferred with those of the Jewish Sanhedrim who came to the trial; and .not daring to refuse Paul's appeal, he told him, "Since thou hast appealed to Cæsar, to Cæsar thou shalt go."

Some time after this, Agrippa, who succeeded Herod in the Tetrarchate of Galilee, with his sister Bernice, came to Cæsarea to pay a visit to Festus, who acquainted Agrippa with Paul's case in the following manner: "There is a certain man left in custody by Felix, against whom the Jews brought an information, and immediately demanded judgment. But I told them, it was not the custom of the Romans to pronounce sentence of death against any man before he be confronted with his accusers, and have liberty to make his defence, and that therefore they must of necessity come to me here; which they did, and the man appeared innocent. Whereupon I remanded him to prison till I could conveniently send him to Cæsar

at Rome."

This account of Paul excited much curiosity in Agrippa to see him, in which Festus promised to gratify him the next day, when Agrippa, Bernice, and Festus, appeared with great pomp and splendor. The company being scated, Festus sent for Paul, whom he thus introduced: "This is the man, O king Agrippa! against whom the Jews in general have made complaint, as against a most notorious malefactor. But when I understood he had committed no capital crime, and that he had appealed to the emperor at Rome, thither I have determined to send him. And being uncertain what to write concerning him

to the emperor, I have brought him forth before this assembly, and especially before your Majesty, that after due examination I might have something to write: for it would appear preposterous to send a man a prisoner without a specific charge against him." When Festus had ended, Agrippa told Paul he had liberty to speak for himself; who desiring silence of the audience, began his speech thus:

"I cannot but think myself happy, O king Agrippa, in that I am permitted to make my defence against the accusation laid by the Jews before your majesty, whom I know to be a perfect master of the Jewish laws and customs;

and for which reason I beg your candid attention."

" My manner of life from my youth, which was among the Jews at Jerusalem, they all know; and that I was a Pharisee, a sect the strictest of all others in the Jewish religion. And accordingly now I am accused for asserting the resurrection of the dead, which, as it is a doctrine acknowledged by the Pharisees, so is it a fundamental promise made by God of old, generally depended on by the Jews, and in hopes of which they spend their time in picty and obedience to God: and yet for believing and expecting this I am accused by these Jews. Why should it be an incredible thing with you, that God, who is omnipotent, should raise the dead? I confess I was once of opinion that I was obliged to persecute this profession and doctrine of Christ, which I did in Jerusalem; and many holy men and women I hurried to prison, the chief priests authorizing me; and when any of them were put to death, I was consenting and active in it. And in other cities besides Jerusalem, I brought them into the courts of judicature, and used most severe means to make them deny Christ, and was so fierce against them, that I forced them to flee to heathen cities, and then pursued them thither. And this I was going to repeat when from the Sanhedrim I received authority to go to Damascus; but at noon-day, O king! I saw a light from heaven, far exceeding the splendor of the sun, which, unable to support, struck me and those that accompanied me to the ground; and instantly, I very distinctly heard a voice, saying to me, in the Hebrew tongue, "Saul, Saul, why

persecutest thou me?" And when I found, to my great astonishment that it was Jesus of Nazareth who spoke to me from heaven, I was directed by him to become a minister of that doctrine which I had before persecuted, and endeavoured to stifle, and received a commission to publish the gospel to the Gentiles, to instruct them in their duty, to turn them from their idolatrous worship to the service of the true God, that by repentance they might receive forgiveness of their sins, and believing in Christ enjoy an eternal portion of bliss among the saints of God. And for this I was assaulted, and in danger of being killed in the temple. But God rescued me, and by his blessed assistance I continue my duty, preaching nothing in effect but what is perfectly agreeable to the writings of Moses and the prophets, who foretold that Christ should be put to death, and that by his rising again, both Jews and Gentiles should be brought to believe in him.".

Here, Festus interrupting Paul, cried out, with a loud voice, "Paul, thou art distracted, much study of these ancient records, drives thee to madness, or thou wouldest

never relate such incredible things!"

But Paul, with the most perfect command of himself, calmly and gravely replied, "I am in my perfect senses, most noble Festus, and what I say is true, without excess or extravagance. I appeal to king Agrippa, before whom I use this freedom of speech, and am confident he knows all this to be true. The life, death, and resurrection of Christ, were things of public notoriety, and cannot be a secret to him that was a Jew born. Believest thou the prophets, O king? I am satisfied thoudost; and knowest their predictions to be fulfilled." Then Agrippa candidly said to Paul, "Thou hast given such an account of these matters, and in so natural and carnest a manner, that instead of condemning thee for being a christian, I am almost persuaded to become one myself!" And Paul, powerfully struck with so remarkable an acknowldgment, said, with great fervency of spirit, and yet with perfect decorum, "O king, I would to God, that not only Thou, but also all who hear me today, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." Upon this the assembly broke up;

and when Agrippa and Festus had consulted together about Paul's case, they freely owned that the accusation laid against him was not punishable by death or imprisonment, the emperors having not as yet made any edict against christians; and that, if he had not appealed to

Rome, he ought to have been discharged.

And now an opportunity offering, Festus sent Paul to Rome, under a guard commanded by one Julius, in a ship belonging to Adramytium, a sea-port of Mysia; and taking Aristarchus of Thessalonica with them, they coasted along Asia till they arrived at Sidon, where Julius, who treated Paul very respectfully, gave him leave to go ashore and refresh himself. Sailing from thence, they came in sight of Cyprus, where they were to lie by a while; but the winds preventing, they passed the seas of Cilicia and Pamphylia, and came to Myra, a maritime city of Lycia. Here, Julius finding a ship belonging to Alexandria bound for Italy, took his charge on board her, and with much ado made Salome, a city of Crete, from whence, after many days slow sailing, they arrived at the Fair-Havens near Lasea; where Paul persuaded the Captain to wait for more seasonable weather, for they had been long beating at sea with contrary winds and very stormy weather: but notwithstanding Paul's advice was prophetical, telling them that if they thus obstinately pursued the voyage, they would not only hazard the ship and goods, but also their lives; yet Julius, preferring the judgment of the master of the ship, they put to sea, intending to reach Phænice, a harbour of Crete, where there was safe riding, and there to winter; and the wind blowing gently at South, they questioned not in the least gaining their point. But they were soon mistaken; for the wind suddenly veering about, blew so very hard at north-east, that they were forced to drive before it. And coming under a little island called Claudá, they had like to have lost their boat, but with much difficulty recovering it, they hoisted it into the ship; and being unable to carry any sail, they lowered them upon deck, and so drove at the mercy of the winds. But the storm continuing, the next day they lightened the ship, and the day following they were forced to cut their masts by

the board, and throw all their tackle overboard. And now the storm increasing, and neither sun nor stars for many days appearing, they despaired of escaping, which Paul seeing, spoke thus to the company: "Sirs, had you taken my advice in staying at Crete, ye had not run this hazard; but take comfort, for we shall suffer no loss but the ship. This I can assure you from the mouth of God, whose angel this night appeared to me, saying, 'Fear not, Paul, for thou must be brought before Cæsar, and God hath, for thy sake, granted life and safety to all them that are with thee in the ship.' Wherefore be of good cheer, for I am confident that this vision, seeing it comes from God, will certainly be made good. But I know also, that the ship will assuredly be wrecked, and

we shall get safe to land on an island."

Driving thus for fourteen days at the mercy of the wind and waves, about midnight, the sailors fancied they were near land, and throwing the lead, they sounded, and found it twenty fathoms; then fifteen; and it being night, and apprehending they might strike upon some shelves in the dark, they threw four anchors a-stern, and waited for day. And now the seamen, resolving to shift for themselves, had hoisted the boat over-board, pretending to moor the ship forward, as they had done abaft. But Paul said to Julius, "Though I told you that no one person in the ship should perish, yet it was upon condition that you would believe and trust God for your preservation, and that the seamen tarry in the ship, and do their duty, and not attempt to escape by the boat; which, if they do, you will all be in danger of your lives." Upon this the soldiers, to prevent the seamen's design, cut the ropes, and let the boat drop: and in the space between that and day-break, Paul advised them to refresh themselves with food, telling them they had so solicitously attended the fate of this fourteenth day, with such anxious care, that they had no leisure or thought of eating, and so had fasted till that time of night, eating nothing\* all the

<sup>\*</sup> Nothing. He that is said to fast, is he that eateth nothing all day long; and so it is explained here, Acts xxvii. 33, "Having taken nothing." The meaning

day before. Therefore, saith he, "I advise you all now to eat, for you will escape the danger, and refreshing yourselves, you will be the better able to bear the difficulties you are to expect." And he set them an example, taking bread and blessing God, they all eat, and were refreshed; and the number of all that were in the ship was two hundred and seventy-six, including soldiers and passengers. After this refreshment, they fell cheerfully to work, unloading the vessel not only of goods, but of the provisions, and throwing them into the sea, with a view to lighten her."

When it was day, they discovered a creek and a haven, into which they endeavoured to steer; and when they had weighed the anchors, they made for the shore, and run the ship aground. The soldiers, seeing land near, advised the captain to kill the prisoners, lest they should escape; but he would not listen to them, having a great desire to save Paul, to whom he continued his former respectful carriage: and therefore commanded them that could swim to throw themselves into the sea first, and the rest on broken planks and pieces got safe to land. Where, when they were all arrived safe, they knew the place to be the island Melita, or Malta.\* And here the islanders, seeing

therefore of this place (without any miracle of subsisting without any nourishment fourteen days together) is to be gathered from the former part of the period, "Expecting this day, the fourteenth day," that is, waiting to see the success of this day; which it seems, in the opinion of the mariners, was the critical day to them, their danger was then at the highest, and they were not likely to out-live it, and so there was no use of eating: and if they escaped this day, they might then possibly hope; and upon these considerations they eat nothing that day; they had no leisure to consider hunger when their greater danger, and more urgent fear was of drowning.

<sup>\*</sup> Melita, now Malta, a celebrated island of the Mediterranean sea, situated between Sicily and the coast of Africa, in a most advantageous position, is generally believed to be the scene of Paul's shipwreck. In ancient history, it is considered as the Hyperia and Ogygia of Homer, in which Calypso received Ulysses; and at a subsequent period was possessed by the Carthaginians, from whom it was taken by the Romans. Its principal town and harbour are remarkable for their great strength; and the island, which is 180 miles in circumference, though naturally

them in distress, treated them with great humanity, making fires to warm their wet and weary limbs, and shewing them all the offices of civility and charity.

Whilst they were drying and warming themselves, a viper, driven from among the wood by the heat of the fire, leaped out, and fastened upon Paul's hand, which when the natives saw, they immediately concluded him guilty of murder, and that divine vengeance had pursued him to that place, to die by the bite of this venomous creature; but he shook it off into the fire, and felt no harm; which they observing, soon altered their opinion, and concluded he was a god.

Near this place was the residence of Publius, the governor of the island, who received and entertained this shipwrecked company with great civility and hospitality for three days; during which time, Paul hearing that the governor's father lay dangerously ill of a fever and a bloody-flux, he went to his apartment, and praying by

barren, has been made by human industry capable of producing large quantities of corn, cotton, fruit, and vegetables. The Arabs expelled the Romans from Malta in 828, and held it till 1190; when the Normans, from Sicily, took possession, and continued masters of it till the reign of the Emperor Charles V.; and by him it was given to the Knights of Rhodes, since better known under the title of Knights of Malta. While in their possession, it was considered as the bulwark of Christendom against the Turks; and in 1564 it sustained a memorable siege, and bade defiance to the whole power of the Turkish empire. The fortifications are a stupendous monument of art and expence, and are many miles in extent, mostly bomb proof, and usually considered, as impregnable; yet it was delivered up to the French during the late war, through the treachery or incapacity of the Grand Master of the Knights, after a sham attack of a few hours. It was afterwards taken by the English, owing to a severe blockade, and the total failure of provisions, and has ever since continued in their possession, which, with their powerful fleets, gives them the supreme command of the Mediterranean sea. Mount Etna at the distance of 200 miles, is clearly discerned from Malta, which is considerably affected by its convulsions; and it is remarkable, that no serpent, or other venomous creature, will live on the island; a circumstance which, from whatever cause it has arisen, is imputed by the superstitious Maltese to the apostle Paul-All religions are tolerated, and the city of Valetta even contains a Turkish mosque. The Knights have entirely lost their authority; and the population of the island, with that of Goza, depending upon and contiguous to it, is about 150,000.

him, laid his hands upon and healed him. The rumour of this miraculous cure soon spread through the island, and those that were afflicted with any disease were brought to Paul, and he restored them to their health and strength. This increased Paul's fame, insomuch that his companions and fellow-sufferers were the better for it, being for his sake highly caressed and entertained. And when they left Malta, they received many marks of esteem from the inhabitants, who presented them with every

necessary for their voyage.

Having tarried at Malta three months, they took shipping in a vessel of Alexandria, that had wintered there, called the Castor and Pollux. Sailing from thence to Syracuse and Sicily, they tarried there three days, and thence to Rhegium in Italy, and so in two days to Puteoli, where they found some Christian professors, who importuned them very much to stay a week with them; after which they advanced towards Rome; and being come as far as Appii Forum and the \*Three Taverns, the Christians in Rome, hearing of Paul's approach, went out to meet him; and when they were come to Rome, Julius delivered the other prisoners to the captain of the guard, but permitted Paul to dwell in a private house, with only a soldier to guard him.

After Paul had been three days at Rome, he desired to speak with the rulers of the Consistory, which the Jews had at Rome. To whom Paul addressed himself in this manner: "Countrymen, though I have done nothing contrary to the laws or customs of the Jews, yet was I by the Jews apprehended, and accused before the Roman procurator; who, when he had examined me, would have discharged me, finding no capital accusation brought against me. But the Jews opposing it, I was obliged to appeal to Cæsar, to get out of their hands, and to clear myself, not to lay any thing to the charge of any of my

<sup>\*</sup> Three Taverns. This is the proper name of a town or city, and not to be rendered an inn or victualling-house, but (as all other proper names) to continue without any alteration. Tabernæ was the name of the frontier towns, which were built against the inroads and insults of the Barbarians.

countrymen. And this is the cause of my desiring to speak with you; for I am imprisoned, as you see, for asserting the resurrection of the dead, which is the result of all the promises of God to the Jews, and that on which every true Israclite depends." Then they said to him, "We have no letters from Judea that mention thee, neither have the Christian Jews made any complaint against thee. But we desire to hear thy opinion more at large; for as concerning this profession and doctrine of Christianity, we know it is generally opposed by our brethren the Jews." Whereupon, a day was appointed, and there came many Jews to his lodging, to whom he preached and explained the doctrine of the gospel, demonstrating from the law of Moses, and the prophecies that were of force among the Jews, the agreeableness and truth of the whole Christian religion. Upon the result of the matter, some believed, and others did not; and when by reason of this difference some warm disputes arose between them, as they departed, Paul told them, "That this unbelief of theirs was a thing which the prophet Isaiah had positively foretold, saying, 'This people will not receive the gospel; for they have contracted a perverse habit of obstinacy and wilful deafness, that they will not hearken to any way of reformation that shall be proposed to them.' Be assured then, that we are not obliged longer to contend with your obdurate temper, but we will preach the gospel to the heathen, who will gladly accept this offered mercy." And upon this they parted, the Jews continuing obstinate in their opinions as they took leave. And Paul continued free from close confinement, living in his hired house for two whole years, preaching the gospel to all who came to him with all freedom and openness, none offering any molestation or restraint.

THUS ENDS THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

#### AN ABSTRACT

OF

### THE TRAVELS AND LABOURS

# Of St. Paul,

## FROM HIS CONVERSION TO HIS DEATH

### AT ROME,

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 70, AND IN THE 14TH OF THE REIGN OF THE EMPEROR

#### NERO.

T)	A.D.	Years after Paul's Conversion	Years of the Roman Emperors
Aut., the persecutor and blasphemer, Acts vii. viii. ix.	٥.		
is converted on his way to Damascus	35	1	Tiberius 20
From Damascus he goes into Arabia, and preaches the	36	2	21
gospel; from thence returning to Damascus, he is per- secuted, and escapes by means of the brethren, in a bas-			
ket over the city wall, Acts, ch. ix. Galatians, ch. i.	37	3	22
He comes to Jerusalem to visit Peter, Acts, ch. ix. 2 Cor.	01	J	ي ي
xii. Galat. i.	38	4	23
The Jews endeavouring to put him to death, he is escor-	39	5	Caligula 1
ted by the Romans to Cæsarea; from thence goes to			· ·
Syria and Tarsus, in Cilicia, Acts, ch. vii. Galat. i.	40	6	2
He goes to Antioch with Barnabas, where the disciples			
were first called Christians, Acts, ch. xi. v. 26	42	8	Claudius 2
The famine predicted by Agabus, Acts, ch. xi	44	10	2
Saint James the Great, first Bishop of Jerusalem, put to			
death by Herod, grandson of Herod the Great, Acts,	15	11	3
ch. xii.	45	11	S
Paulus Emilius, Proconsul of Cyprus, converted by St. Paul, Acts, ch. xiii.	46	12	4
Paul, Acts, ch. xiii.  He preaches in Antioch and Pisidia, part of Galatia,	40	12	Ŧ
Acts, ch. xiv.	47	13	5
Comes to Iconium, and remains there some time, Acts, ch.			
xiii. xiv.	48	· 14	6
He cures a lame man at Lystra, and is soon after stoned,			
Acts, xvi.	49	15	7
Having ordained elders in all the churches, and visited		1.0	0
Pisidia and Pamphylia, he returns to Antioch	50	16	S

## The Travels and Labours of St. Paul.

	A.D.	y cars aiter aul's Conversion		Years of the Roman Emperors
At this time the apostles held a council at Jerusalem, wherein St. Paul assisted; and having returned to Anti- och, he there resisted St. Peter to the face, Acts, xv.		Ä		Ä
Galatians, ch. ii.  St. Paul goes with Silas into Syria and Cilicia, to strengthen the churches; afterward to Derbe and Lystra with	<b>5</b> 2	18	Claudius	s 10
Timothy, thence to Macedonia, and established the church of Philippi, Acts, ch. xv. xvi.	54	20		12
He preaches at Athens, and goes from thence to Thessalonica, Acts, ch. xvii.	55	21		13
He preaches at Corinth eighteen months, and from thence writes to the Romans, Acts, ch. xviii.  He goes to Ephesus; from thence to Cæsarea, afterward	<b>5</b> 6	22		14
to Jerusalem, and thence to Antioch		23 24	Nero	1 2
and leaves Timothy first bishop of the church of Ephesus, Acts, ch. xix. 1 Tim. ch. i.	59	25		3
He writes his first epistle to the Corinthians from Ephesus, 1 Cor. ch. xvi.  After the tumult made at Ephesus was appeased, he goes to Troas, and from thence to Macedonia, where being at Philippi, he writes his second epistle to the Corinthians by St. Luke and Titus, Acts, ch. xx. and 2 Cor. ch.	60	26		4
ii. and xiii. In this city he was scourged and put into the stocks.  From Philippi he goes into Greece, 1 Cor. ch. xvi. and 2 Cor. ch. xii. And because of the snares laid for him,	61	27		5
returns by Macedonia to Troas, and meets there Aristarchus and Timothy, Acts, ch. xx.  At Troas St. Paul restores a dead person to life. He goes to Assos and Mytelene, to Samos, Trogyllium, and Miletus. At Ephesus he bids the church a final adieu, and sails to Rhodes, Patara, Tyrus, Ptolemais, and thence to Cæsarea, from whence proceeding to Jerusalem, he is	62	28		6
there apprehended on a false charge of sedition, Acts, ch. xxi. and xxii.  Brought as a prisoner to Cæsarea he pleads before Felix, remains two years in prison, and appeals to Cæsar at	63	29		7
Rome, Acts, ch. xxiii. and xxiv.  St. Paul is sent a prisoner to Rome by sea, accompanied by the holy evangelist Luke, and is shipwrecked on the	65	31		9.
island of Malta, Acts, ch. xxvii.  While in chains at Rome he writes his epistles to the	66	<b>3</b> 2		11
churches of Galatia, Ephesus, and Philippi  He writes the epistle to the Colossians, and to Philemon He writes his second epistle to Timothy a little before his	68	33 34		12 13
death  He is brought before the tyrant Nero the second time, and being a Roman citizen, is condemned to lose his head	69	35		
for preaching the gospel	70	36		14

It is generally believed, that St. Paul obtained a deliverance from his first imprisonment at Rome, and, after a short time, to have been carried there again. Particularly commissioned by his Divine Master to preach the gospel to the Gentile world, he became eminently useful, and in labours more abundant than all the other apostles. As an orator he shines to great advantage; and even Longinus himself speaks of him in terms of approba-Though the most humble, as well as most useful of mankind, none but his own inimitable pen has done justice to his truly great and exalted character, in the eleventh chapter of his second epistle to the Corinthians. In the city of Tarsus, where he was born, he had every advantage which a polite and learned education could bestow upon him, and finished his studies at the feet of Gamaliel, in Jerusalem. Ecclesiastical writers have said, that during his second imprisonment, he converted Poppea Sabina, the concubine of Nero. Certain it is, that he was beheaded by order of that tyrant, toward the close of his reign, who soon after fell a just sacrifice to the injured people of Rome.

## APPENDIX.

### HISTORY OF THE CHURCH,

FROM THE CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK OF 'THE ACTS,' TO THE CLOSE OF THE FIRST CENTURY.

(Abridged from Mr. Milner's History of the Church, Vol. I.)

T seems plain, that the apostles in general did not leave Judea, till after the first council held at Jerusalem. They seem never to have been in haste to quit the land of their nativity. Probably the threatening appearances of its desolation by the Romans, hastened their departure into distant regions. And before the close of this century it appears, that the power of the gospel was

felt throughout the Roman empire.

It was about the year of our Lord 64, that the city of Rome sustained a general conflagration. The emperor Nero, lost as he was to all sense of reputation, was yet studious to avert the infamy of being reckoned the author of this calamity, which was generally imputed to him. But no steps that he could take were sufficient to clear him. There was, however, a particular set of people, so singularly distinct from the rest of mankind, and so much hated on account of the condemnation which their doctrine and purity of life affixed to all except themselves, that they might be calumniated with impunity. These were then known at Rome by the name of Christians. Unless we transplant ourselves into those times, we can scarce conceive how odious and contemptible the appellation then was. The judicious Tacitus calls their religion "a detestable superstition,\* which at first was suppressed, and afterwards broke out afresh, and spread not only through Judea, the origin of the evil, but through the metropolis also, the common sewer in which every thing filthy and flagitious meets and spreads." If so grave and cautious a writer as Tacitus, can thus asperse the Christians without proof and without moderation, we need not wonder, that so impure a wretch as Nero should not hesitate to charge them with the crime of burning Rome.

Now it was that the Romans legally persecuted the church for the first time. Their execution was aggravated with insult. They were covered with skins of wild beasts, and torn by dogs; were crucified, and set on fire, that they might serve for lights in the night-time. Nero offered his gardens for this spectacle, and exhibited the games of the circus. People could not, however, avoid pitying them, because they suffered not for the public

good, but to gratify the cruelty of a tyrant.

Three or four years were probably the utmost extent of this tremendous persecution, as soon after the tyrant was himself, by a dreadful exit, summoned before the Divine Tribunal. He left the Roman world in a state of extreme confusion. Judea partook of it in an eminent manner. About forty years after our Lord's sufferings, wrath came on the body of the Jewish nation to the uttermost, in a manner too well known to need the least account in this history. What became of the Christian Jews, alone concerns us. The congregation were commanded, by an oracle revealed to the best approved among them, that before the wars began, they should depart from the city, and inhabit a village beyond Jordan, called Pella. Thither they retired, and were saved from the destruction which soon after overwhelmed their countrymen, at once observing the precept, and fulfilling the well-known prophecy of their Saviour. The death of Nero, and the destruction of Jerusalem, would naturally occasion some respite to them from their sufferings; and we hear no more of their persecuted state, till the reign of Domitian, the last of the Flavian family, who succeeded to the empire in the year 81.

In the year of 96 Domitian was slain, and Nerva, the succeeding emperor, published a pardon for those who were condemned for impiety, recalled those who were banished, and forbad the accusing of any men on account of impiety, or Judaism. Others who were under accusation, or under sentence of condemnation,

now escaped by the lenity of Nerva.

The apostles and evangelists of this period, were their story distinctly known, would afford materials indeed of the rarest pleasure to every Christian mind. But there never arose in the church any historians like Thucydides and Livy, to illustrate the actions of saints. Heroes and statesmen have their reward here, saints hereafter. Christ's kingdom must not appear to be of this world, and while large volumes have been filled with the exploits of heroes, and the intrigues of statesmen, those men who were the divine instruments of evangelizing souls, the New Testament history excepted, are for the most part unknown. What I can collect the reader shall see; though he will find it is but little.

The first of the twelve apostles who suffered martyrdom, we have seen, was James the son of Zebedee, who fell a sacrifice to Herod. A crippe's architicum desire of popularity.

Herod Agrippa's ambitious desire of popularity.

The other James was preserved in Judea to a much later period. His martyrdom took place about the year 62, and his epistle was published a little before his death. As he always

resided at Jerusalem, and was providentially preserved through various persecutions, he had an opportunity of overcoming enmity itself, and abating prejudice, in some measure. of Just was generally given him on account of his singular innocence and integrity. And as he conformed to Jewish customs with more than occasional regularity, he was by no means so odious in the eyes of his countrymen, as the apostle of the Gentiles. But could he have fully overcome their enmity, he could not have been faithful to Christ. Many Jews respected the man, and admired the fruits of the gospel in him. The root and principle was still their abhorrence, and from the account of Eusebius, the testimony of Hegesippus, an early Christian historian, whom he quotes, and of Josephus, it is plain, that it was thought a pitiable thing, that so good a man should be a Christian. Paul's escape from Jewish malice, by appealing to Cæsar, had sharpened the spirits of this people, and they were determined to wreak their vengeance on James, who was merely a Jew, and could plead no Roman exemptions. Festus dying president of Judea, before his successor Albinus arrived, Ananias the high-priest, a sadducee, and a merciless persecutor, held the supreme power in the interim, and called a council, before which he brought James with some others, accusing them of breaking the law of Moses. But it was not easy to procure his condemnation. His holy life had long obtained the veneration of his countrymen.

The great men were uneasy on account of the vast increase of Christian converts by his means, and endeavoured to entangle him, by persuading him to mount a pinnacle of the temple, and to speak to the people assembled at the time of the passover, against Christianity. James being placed aloft, delivered a frank confession of Jesus as then sitting at the right hand of power, and who should come in the clouds of heaven. Upon this Ananias and the rulers were highly incensed. To disgrace his character was their first intention. This had failed. murder his person was the next, and the attempt was of very speedy execution. Crying out, that Justus himself was seduced, they threw him down, and stoned him. The apostle had strength to fall on his knees, and to pray, "I beseech thee, Lord God and Father, for them; for they know not what they do." One of the priests moved with the scene, cried out, "Cease, what do you mean? this just man is praying for you." A person present, with a fuller's club, beat out his brains, and completed

his martyrdom.

Very remarkable is the acknowledgment of Josephus. "These things" (meaning the miseries of the Jews from the Romans) happened to them by way of avenging the death of James the Just, the brother of Jesus, whom they call Christ. For the Jews

slew him, though a very just man." And from the same writer we learn, that Albinus severely reprimanded Ananias, and soon

after deprived him of the high-priesthood.

After the death of James, and the desolation of Jerusalem, the apostles and disciples of our Lord, of whom many were yet alive, gathered themselves together with our Lord's kinsmen, to appoint a pastor of the church of Jerusalem in the room of James. The election fell on Simeon, the son of that Cleophas mentioned by St. Luke, as one of the two who went to Emmaus, and who was the brother of Joseph, our Lord's reputed father. We shall leave Simeon, the chief pastor of the Jewish church,

at the end of this century.

Paul the apostle seems to have laboured with unwearied activity, from about the year 36 to the year 63, that is, from his conversion to the period in which St. Luke finishes his history. Within this period he wrote fourteen epistles, which will be the blessed means of feeding the souls of the faithful to the end of time. The second epistle to Timothy has been commonly supposed to have been written just before his martyrdom. From this epistle it is evident, that he had already been called before Nero, agreeably to the prediction, "thou must be brought before Cæsar;" and that no Christian durst appear for him; he feelingly complains, "all men forsook me." Yet he knew how to distinguish between malevolence and timidity; and therefore, though he could not excuse their neglect of him, he prays God that it might not be laid to their charge. But the grace of the Lord Jesus, which had hitherto been so eminently with the apostle, forsook him not in his trying moments. The Lord stood with, and strengthened him." He was enabled to testify for Christ and his gospel before Nero, with the same frankness, fortitude, and eloquence, that he had done before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa. And for the first time, and probably the last, the murderous tyrant Nero heard the glad tidings of salvation. It seems, by the expression, "that all the Gentiles might hear," that Paul was heard in a very full and solemn assembly, and had an opportunity of giving a clear account of Christianity. And as some of Casar's household are mentioned as saints in the episde to the Philippians, there is reason to apprehend that the preaching was not in vain. He was, as he owns, "delivered from the mouth of the lion." Paul seems to have had this audience during the former part of his imprisonment at Rome, and to have been remanded to his confinement for the present.

Here he wrote the epistles to the Philippians and Colossians before the end of the year 62. From the former of these it appears, that the whole court of Nero was made acquainted with his case, and that the cause of the gospel was promoted by this

means. In the epistle to Philemon, he expresses a confidence of being soon set at liberty, and promises, in that case, shortly to

pay them a visit.

Having obtained his liberty in the year 63, he most probably would soon fulfil his promise to visit the Hebrews; after which he might see his Colossian friends. That he ever visited Spain or Britain, is, to say no more, extremely doubtful. And if he once more made an Asiatic tour, there seems not time enough for his accomplishing the western journey, as he suffered martyrdom on his return to Rome in 64 or 65. He could have had no great pleasure at Jerusalem; every thing was there hastening to ruin. No man was ever possessed of a more genuine patriotic spirit than this apostle. The Jewish war, which commenced in 66, would have much afflicted him, had he lived to see it. But returning to Rome about a year before, he fell in with the very time when Rome was burnt, and Christians were accused as incendiaries. He now found no mercy in Nero, who would naturally be displeased at the effect, which he had observed his preaching had produced in his own family. A cup-bearer and a concubine of his had been, through Paul's means, converted to the faith, as Chrysostom assures us; and this hastened his death. He was slain with the sword by Nero's order.\*

Of St. Peter we have by no means so large an account as of St. Paul. The last view we have of him in scripture presents him to us at Antioch. This was probably about the year 50. After this he was employed in spreading the gospel principally among his own countrymen, but one cannot suppose exclusively of Gentiles, in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. His two epistles were directed to the Hebrew converts of these countries. And if he was far less successful than Paul among the Gentiles, he was much more so than he among the Jews. He who wrought effectually in the one among the former, was mighty in the other among the latter.† It should ever be remember-

ed, who alone did the work, and gave the increase.

Peter probably came to Rome about the year 63. Thence a little before his martyrdom he wrote his two epistles.

Of the labours of nine apostles, nothing in a manner is record-

<sup>\*</sup> Order. Some historians affirm, that he was beheaded on the same day in which Peter was crucified, in the beginning of the year 66, when he was upwards of 70 years of age, at Aquæ Saleræ, three miles from Rome, and was buried in the Via Ostensis, on a spot whereon Constantine the Great erected a magnificent church to his memory.

<sup>†</sup> Gal. ii. 8.

ed, James, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew,

Jude, Simon, and Matthias.

Of John the apostle a few valuable fragments may be collected. He was present at the council of Jerusalem, which was held about the year 50, nor is it probable, that he left Judea till that time. Asia Minor was the great theatre of his ministry, particularly Ephesus, the care of which church remained with him after the decease of the rest of the apostles. The breaking out of the war in Judea would probably oblige the apostle to bid a total farewell to his native country. While he resided at Ephesus, going once to bathe there, and perceiving that Cerinthus was in the bath, he came out again hastily. Let us flee, says he, lest the bath should fall, while Cerinthus, an enemy of truth, is within. Tertullian tells us, that by order of Domitian, John was cast into a caldron of boiling oil, and came out again without being hurt. The miracle softened not the heart of Domitian, who would probably suppose the apostle to have been fortified by some magical incantations. He banished him into the solitary isle of Patmos, where he was favoured with the visions of the Apocalypse. After Domitian's death he returned from Patmos, and governed the Asiatic churches. There he remained till the time of Trajan. the request of the bishops, he went to the neighbouring churches, partly to ordain pastors, and partly to regulate the congregations. At one place in his tour, observing a remarkably handsome young person, he warmly recommended him to the care of a particular pastor. The young man was baptized, and for a time lived as a But being gradually corrupted by bad company, he became idle, intemperate, and at length so dishonest, as to become captain of a band of robbers. Some time after, John had occasion to inquire of the pastor concerning the young man, who told him, that he was now dead to God, and inhabited a mountain over against his church. John, in the vehemence of his charity, went to the place, and exposed himself to be taken by the robbers. "Bring me," says he, "to your captain," who beheld him coming. As soon as he knew the apostle, he was struck with shame and fled. The aged apostle, following him, cried, " My son, why flyest thou from thy father, unarmed and old? Fear not, as yet there remaineth hope of salvation. Believe me, Christ hath sent me." Hearing this, the young man stood still, trembled, and wept bitterly. John prayed, exhorted, and brought him back to the society of Christians, nor did he leave him, till he found him fully restored by divine grace.

We have yet another story of St. John. Being now very old, and unable to say much in Christian assemblies, "Children, love one another," was his constantly-repeated sermon. Being asked why he told them only one thing, he answered, that no-

thing else was needed.

John lived three or four years after his return to Asia, having been preserved to the age of an hundred years for the benefit of the church of Christ, a pattern of charity and goodness, greater than I know how to describe.

Of the apostle Barnabas nothing is known, except what is recorded in the Acts. There we have an honourable encomium of his character, and a particular description of his joint labours

with St. Paul.

Thus have we seen the most astonishing revolution in the human mind, and in human manners, that was ever known in any age, effected without any human power legal or illegal, and even against the united opposition of all the powers then in the world; and this too not in countries rude or uncivilized, but in the most humanized, the most learned, and the most polished part of the globe, within the Roman empire; no part of which was exempted from a sensible share in its effects. This empire, within the first century at least, seems to have been the proper limit of Christian conquests.

#### ADDENDA.

The Christian reader will probably wish to know when, and by what means, the gospel was introduced into Britain. Of this various accounts have been given, but the following seems en-

titled to the best regard of any we have seen.

The most calamitous events are often, through the wise direction of a superintending Providence, productive of the most important and happy consequences. Caractacus, King of the Britons, was, through the treachery of Cartismandua, Queen, of the Brigantes, betrayed into the hands of his enemies, and carried captive to Rome. His father, Bran (or Branus,) 'his wife, children, and brothers, shared in this calamity, and remained prisoners there for seven years, while the great apostle of the Gentiles was successfully planting the standard of the gospel in the capital of the world. An opportunity thus afforded to those illustrious Britons, of attending the first preachers of Christianity, Branus, and others of his family, were converted to the faith, and on their return introduced the gospel into Wales. On this account, Bran (or Branus) is called, in the venerable and uncorrupted chronicles of Wales, one of the three blessed sovereigns of Britain. Cyllin, or St. Cyllin, son of Caractacus, and Eigen his daughter, were also among the first to establish Christianity among their unenlightened countrymen. The latter is accounted the first female saint in Britain. On their return from Rome, they brought with them, A. D. 70, Ilid a Jewish Christian, and Cynday, another convert, to assist in preaching the gospel.

Towards the close of the second century, Lleirwg, the son of Coel ab Cyllin Sant, called Lleuver Mawr, and Lles, or Lucius, prince of the Silures, formed the laudable design of diffusing the knowledge of the Christian faith generally over his dominions. In order to further the grand design, he sent over to Rome for the assistance of some able teachers; whereupon Eleutherius sent Dyvan, Fagan, Medwy, and Elvan for that purpose. The first Christian church was built by Lleirwg, at Llanday, "under national protection, right, and privilege." On this account, Lleirwg was ranked with Bran and Cadwaledr, under the appellation of the three blessed princes of the isle of Britain.

The place where Elvan taught was Yans y Vallon, or the present Glastonbury. Fagan has a church dedicated to him in Glamorganshire. The following wise saying of Fagan is still preserved, "Lle taw Duw nid doeth yngan;" "Where God is silent, it is not wise to speak." Dyvan was great-grandson of Manawydan, son of Bran. Of Medwy we have no further particulars, but that he came over with the other three from Rome.\*

<sup>\*</sup> This account is found in authentic documents still extant in the ancient British language, called, "Trioedd Ynys Prydain," the Welsh Triads; and "Bonedd y Sant," the Genealogy of the British Saints. It adds to the authenticity of these ancient records, that they were composed before the introduction of popery among the Welsh. See the above names in the Cambrian Biography, by Mr. W. Owen, F. A. S. Evan. Mag. November 1806, p. 506, 507. See also Tertullian contra Judaeos, Venerable Bede, Gildas the Briton, and Fox in his Martyrology, who all agree, that the gospel was planted in Britain at a very early period, and, most probably, during the first century.

## E

Aaron born, v. i. 70 .... sent to meet Moses, 183....makes the golden calf, 220....is consecrated to God, 235.... dies in Mount Hor, aged 123 years, 258.

Abel killed by Cain, 23.

Abraham born, 39....leaves his country, 41....defeats the kings, 44....meets Melchizedeck, 45....marries Hagar, 48....his name changed, 49....marries Keturah, 71....dies, aged 175. Abimelech, king of Gerar, 58....his

league with Abraham, 61.

Abimelech made king, 344....kills his seventy brethren, 346....destroys Shechem, and sows it with salt, 347. takes Thebez, and is there killed, 348. Abdon judges Israel eight years, 355.

Abner, Saul's general, 403, 419....goes over to David, 430.

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